BHAGAVADGITA
English translation of Sri Ramanuja's Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda
Chapter 1

1.1 - 1.19 Dhrtarastra said --- Sanjaya said -- Duryodhana, after viewing the forces of Pandavas protected by bhima, and his own forces protected by bhisma conveyed his views thus to Drona, his teacher, about the adequacy of bhima's forces for conquering the Kaurava forces and the inadequacy of his own forces for victory against the Pandava forces. He was grief-stricken within. Observing his (Duryodhana's) despondecny, bhisma, in order to cheer him, roared like a lion, and then blowing his conch, made his side sound their conchs and kettle-drums, which made an uproar as a sign of victory. Then, having heard that great tumult, Arjuna and Sri Krsna the Lord of all lords, who was acting as the charioteer of Arjuna, sitting in their great chariot which was powerful enough to conquer the three worlds; blew their divine conchs Srimad Pancajanya and Devadatta. Then, both Yudhisthira and bhima blew their respective conchs separately. That tumult rent asunder the hearts of your sons, led by Duryodhana. The sons of Dhrtarastra then thought, 'Our cause is almost lost now itself.' So said Sanjaya to Dhrtarastra who was longing for their victory.

Sanjaya said to Dhrtarastra: Then, seeing the Kauravas, who were ready for battle, Arjuna, who had Hanuman, noted for his exploit of burning Lanka, as the emblem on his flag on his chariot, directed his charioteer Sri Krsna, the Supreme Lord-who is overcome by parental love for those who take shelter in Him who is the treasure-house of knowledge, power, lordship, energy, potency and splendour, whose sportive delight brings about the origin, sustentation and dissolution of the entire cosmos at His will, who is the Lord of the senses, who controls in all ways the senses inner and outer of all, superior and inferior --- by saying, 'Station my chariot in an appropriate place in order that I may see exactly my enemies who are eager for battle.'

1.20 - 1.25 Arjuna said --- Sanjaya said -- Thus, directed by him, Sri Krsna did immediately as He had been directed, while bhisma,

Drona and others and all the kings were looking on. Such is the prospect of victory for your men.

1.26 - 1.47 Arjuna said --- Sanjaya said -- Sanjaya continued: The high-minded Arjuna, extremely kind, deeply friendly, and supremely righteous, having brothers like himself, though repeatedly deceived by the treacherous attempts of your people like burning in the lac-house etc., and therefore fit to be killed by him with the help of the Supreme Person, nevertheless said, 'I will not fight.' He felt weak, overcome as he was by his love and extreme compassion for his relatives. He was also filled with fear, not knowing what was righteous and what unrighteous. His mind was tortured by grief, because of the thought of future separation from his relations. So he threw away his bow and arrow and sat on the chariot as if to fast to death.

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Chapter 2

2.1 - 2.3 Sanjaya said --- Lord said -- When Arjuna thus sat, the Lord, opposing his action, said: 'What is the reason for your misplaced grief? Arise for battle, abandoning this grief, which has arisen in a critical situation, which can come only in men of wrong understanding, which is an obstacle for reaching heaven, which does not confer fame on you, which is very mean, and which is caused by faint-heartedness.

2.4 - 2.5 Arjuna said -- Again Arjuna, being moved by love, compassion and fear, mistaking unrighteousness for righteousness, and not understanding, i.e., not knowing the beneficial words of Sri Krsna, said as follows: 'How can I slay bhisma, Drona and others worthy or reverence? After slaying those elders, though they are intensely attached to enjoyments, how can I enjoy those very pleasures which are now being enjoyed by them? For, it will be mixed with their blood.

2.6 - 2.8 If you say, 'After beginning the war, if we withdraw from the battle, the sons of Dhrtarastra will slay us all forcibly', be it so. I think that even to be killed by them, who do not know the difference between righteousness and unrighteousness, is better for us than gaining unrighteous victory by killing them. After saying so, Arjuna surrendered himself at the feet of the Lord, overcome with dejection, saying. 'Teach me, your disciple, who has taken refuge in you, what is good for me.'

2.9 - 2.10 Sanjaya said -- Thus, the Lord, the Supreme Person, introduced the Sastra regarding the self for the sake of Arjuna --- whose natural courage was.lost due to love and compassion in a misplaced situation, who thought war to be unrighteous even though it was the highest duty for warriors (Ksatriyas), and who took refuge in Sri Krsna to know what his right duty was ---, thinking that Arjuna's delusion would not come to an end except by the knowledge of the real nature of the self, and that war was an

ordained duty here which, when freed from attachment to fruits, is a means for self-knowledge. Thus, has it been said by Sri Yamunacarya: 'The introduction to the Sastra was begun for the sake of Arjuna, whose mind was agitated by misplaced love and compassion and by the delusion that righteousness was unrighteousness, and who took refuge in Sri Krsna.' The Supreme Person spoke these words as if smiling, and looking at Arjuna, who was thus overcome by grief resulting from ignorance about the real nature of the body and the self, but was nevertheless speaking about duty as if he had an understanding that the self is distinct from the body, and while he (Arjuna), torn between contradictory ideas, had suddenly become inactive standing between the two armies that were getting ready to fight. Sri Krsna said, as if in ridicule, to Arjuna the words beginning with, 'There never was a time when I did not exist' (II. 12), and ending with 'I will release you from all sins; grieve not!' (XVIII. 66) --- which have for their contents the real nature of the self, of the Supreme Self, and of the paths of work (Karma), knowledge (Jnana) and devotion (hakti) which constitute the means for attaining the highest spiritual fulfilment.

2.11 The Lord said -- You are grieving for those who do not deserve to be grieved for. You also speak words of wisdom about the nature of the body and the self as follows: 'The ancestors fall degraded, deprived of the ritual oblations of food and water' (I. 42). There is no reason for such grief for those who possess the knowledge of the nature of the body and the self. Those who know the exact truth will not grieve for those bodies from which life has departed and for those from whome the principle of life has not departed. They do not grieve for bodies or souls. Hence, in you this contradiction is visible --- your grief at the thought 'I shall slay them?' and at the same time your talk about righteousness and unrighteousness, as if it were the result of knowledge of the self as distinct from the body. Therefore you do not know the nature of the body nor of the self which is distinct from the body and is eternal. or do you know of duties like war etc., which (as duty) constitute the means for the attainment of the self, nor of the fact that this war (which forms a duty in the present context), if fought without any selfish desire for results, is a means for the attainment of the knowledge of the true nature of the self. The implied meaning is

this: This self, verily, is not dependent on the body for Its existence, nor is It subjected to destruction on the death of the body, as there is no birth or death for It. Therefore there is no cause for grief. But the body is insentient by nature, is subject to change, and its birth and death are natural; thus it (body) too is not to be grieved for. First listen about the nature of the self.

2.12 Indeed, I, the Lord of all, who is eternal, was never non-existent, but existed always. It is not that these selves like you, who are subject to My Lordship, did not exist; you have always existed. It is not that 'all of us', I and you, shall cease to be 'in the future', i.e., beyond the present time; we shall always exist. Even as no doubt can be entertainted that I, the Supreme Self and Lord of all, am eternal, likewise, you (Arjuna and all others) who are embodied selves, also should be considered eternal. The foregoing implies that the difference between the Lord, the sovereign over all, and the individual selves, as also the differences among the individual selves themselves, are real. This has been declared by the Lord Himself. For, different terms like 'I', 'you', 'these', 'all' and 'we' have been used by the Lord while explaining the truth of eternality in order to remove the misunderstanding of Arjuna who is deluded by ignorance. [Now follows a refutation of the Upadhi theory of bhaskara and the Ignorance theory of the Advaitins which deny any ultimate difference between the Lord and the Jivas.] If we examine (bhaskara's) theory of Upadhis (adjuncts), which states that the apparent differences among Jivas are due to adjuncts, it will have to be admitted that mention about differences is out of place when explaining the ultimate truth, because the theory holds that there are no such differences in reality. but that the differences mentioned by the Lord are natural, is taught by the Sruti also: 'Eternal among eternals, sentient among sentients, the one, who fulfils the desires of the many' (Sve. U. VI. 13, Ka. U. V. 13). The meaning of the text is: Among the eternal sentient beings who are countless, He, who is the Supreme Spirit, fulfils the desires of all.' As regards the theory of the Advaitins that the perception of difference is brought about by ignorance only and is not really real, the Supreme being ---whose vision must be true and who, therefore must have an immediate cognition of the differencelss and immutable and eternal consciousness as constituting the

nature of the Atman in all authenticity, and who must thereby be always free from all ignorance and its effects --- cannot possibly perceive the so-called difference arising from ignornace. It is, therefore, unimaginable that He engages himself in activities such as teaching, which can proceed only from such a perception of differences arising from ignorance. The argument that the Supreme being, though possessed of the understanding of non-duality,.can still have the awareness of such difference persisting even after sublation, just as a piece of cloth may have been burnt up and yet continues to have the appearance of cloth, and that such a continuance of the subltated does not cause bondage --- such an argument is invalid in the light of another analogy of a similar kind, namely, the perception of the mirage, which, when understood to be what it is, does not make one endeavour to fetch water there from. In the same way even if the impression of difference negated by the non-dualistic illumination persists, it cannot impel one to activities such as teaching; for the object to whom the instruction is to be imparted is discovered to be unreal. The idea is that just as the discovery of the non-existence of water in a mirage stops all effort to get water from it, so also when all duality is sublated by illumination, no activity like teaching disciples etc., can take place. Nor can the Lord be conceived as having been previously ignorant and as attaining knowledge of unity through the scirptures, and as still being subject to the continuation of the stultified experiences. Such a position would stand in contradiction to the Sruti and the Smrti: 'He, who is all-comprehender' (Mun. U., 1. 1. 9); all knower and supreme and natural power of varied types are spoken of in Srutis, such as knowledge, strength and action' (Sve. U. 6. 8); 'I know, Arjuna, all beings of the past, present and future but no one knows Me,' etc. (Gita 7. 26). And again, if the perception of difference and distinction are said to persist even after the unitary Self has been decisively understood, the question will arise --- to whom will the Lord and the succession of teachers of the tradition impart the knowledge in accordance with their understanding?

The question needs an answer. The idea is that knowledge of non-duality and perception of differences cannot co-exist. If it be replied by Advaitins holding the bimba-Pratibimba (the original and reflections) theory that teachers give instructions to their own reflections in the form of disciples such as Arjuna, it would amount

to an absurdity. For, no one who is not out of his senses would undertake to give any instruction to his own reflections in mediums such as a precious stone, the blade of a sword or a mirror, knowing, as he does, that they are non-different from himself. The theory of the persistence of the sublated is thus impossible to maintain, as the knowledge of the unitary self destroys the beginningless ignorance in which differences falling outside the self are supposed to be rooted. 'The persistence of the sublated' does occur in.cases such as the vision of the two moons, where the cause of the vision is the result of some real defect in eyesight, nor removable by the right understanding of the singleness of the moon. Even though the perception of the two moons may continue, the sublated cognition is rendered inconsequential on the strength of strong contrary evidence. For, it will not lead to any activity appropriate for a real experience. but in the present context (i.e. the Advaitic), the conception of difference, whose object and cause are admittedly unreal, is cancelled by the knowledge of reality. So the 'persistence of the sublated' can in no way happen. Thus, if the Supreme Lord and the present succession of preceptors have attained the understanding of (Non-dual) reality, their perception of difference and work such as teaching proceeding from that perception, are impossible. If, on the other hand, the perception of difference persists because of the continuance of ignorance and its cause, then these teachers are themselves ignorant of the truth, and they will be incapable of teaching the truth. Further, as the preceptor has attained the knowledge of the unitary self and thereby the ignorance concerning brahman and all the effects of such ignorance are thus annihilated, there is no purpose in instructing the disciple. It it is held that the preceptor and his knowledge are just in the imagination of the disciple, the disciple and his knowledge are similarly the product of the imagination of the preceptor, and as such can not put an end to the ignorance in question. If it is maintained that the disciple's knowledge destroys ignorance etc., because it contradicts the antecedent state of non-enlightenment, the same can be asserted of the preceptor's knowledge. The futility of such teachings is obvious. Enough of these unsound doctrines which have all been refuted.

2.13 As the self is eternal, one does not grieve, thinking that the self is lost, when an embodied self living in a body gives up the state of childhood and attains youth and other states. Similarly, the wise men, knowing that the self is eternal, do not grieve, when the self attains a body different from the present body. Hence the selves, being eternal, are not fit objects for grief. This much has to be done here; the eternal selves because of Their being subject ot beginningless Karma become endowed with bodies suited to their Karmas. To get rid of this bondage (of bodies), embodied beings perform duties like war.appropriate to their stations in life with the help of the same bodies in an attitude of detachment from the fruits as prescribed by the scripture. Even to such aspirants, contacts with sense-objects give pleasure and pain, arising from cold, heat and such other things. but these experiences are to be endured till the acts enjoined in the scriptures come to an end. The Lord explains the significance immediately afterwards:

2.14 As sound, touch, form, taste and smell with their bases, are the effects of subtle elements (Tanmatras), they are called Matras. The contact with these through the ear and other senses gives rise to feelings of pleasure and pain, in the form of heat and cold, softness and hardness. The words 'cold and heat' illustrate other sensations too. Endure these with courage till you have discharged your duties as prescribed by the scriptures. The brave must endure them patiently, as they 'come and go'. They are transient. When the Karmas, which cause bondage, are destroyed, this 'coming and going' will end. The Lord now explains the purpose of this endurance:

2.15 That person endowed with courage, who considers pain as inevitable as pleasure, and who performs war and such other acts suited to his station in life without attachment to the results and only as a means of attaining immortality --- one whom the impact of weapons in war etc., which involve soft or harsh contacts, do not trouble, that person only attains immortality, not a person like you, who cannot bear grief. As the selves are immortal, what is to be done here, is this much only. This is the meaning. bbecause of the immortality of the selves and the natural destructibility of the bodies, there is no cause for grief. It was told (previously): 'The

wise grieve neither for the dead nor for the living' (2. 11). Now the Lord elucidates the same view.

2.16 'The unreal,' that is, the body, can never come into being. 'The real,' that is, the self, can never cease to be. The finale about these, the body and theself, which can be experienced, has been realised correctly by the seers of the Truth. As analyis ends in conclusion, the term 'finale' is here used. The meaning is this: Non-existence (i.e., perishableness) is the real nature of the body which is in itself insentient. Existence (i.e., imperishableness) is the real.nature of the self, which is sentient. [What follows is the justification of describing the body as 'unreal' and as having 'never come into being.'] Non-existence has, indeed, the nature of perishableness, and existence has the nature of imperishableness, as hagavan Parasara has said: 'O bbrahmana, apart from conscious entity there does not exist any group of things anywhere and at any time. Thus have I taught you what is real existence --- how conscious entity is real, and all else is unreal' (V. P., 2.12.43 - 45). 'The Supreme Reality is considered as imperishable by the wise. There is no doubt that what can be obtained from a perishable substance is also perishable' (Ibid., 2.14.24). 'That entity which even by a change in time cannot come to possess a difference through modification etc., is real. What is that entity, O King? (It is the self who retains Its knowledge)' (Ibid., 2.13.100). It is said here also: 'These bodies ... are said to have an end' (2.18) and 'Know That (the Atman) to be indestructible' (2.17). It is seen from this that this (i.e., perishableness of the body and imperishableness of the self) is the reason for the designating the Atman as 'existence' (Sattva) and body as 'non-existence' (Asvattva). This verse has no reference to the doctrine of Satkaryavada (i.e., the theory that effects are present in the cause), as such a theory has no relevance here. Arjuna is deluded about the true nature of the body and the self; so what ought to be taught to him in order to remove his delusion, is discrimination between these two --- what is qualified by perishablenss and what, by imperishableness. This (declaration) is introduced in the following way: 'For the dead, or for the living' (2.11). Again this poin is made clear immediately (by the words), 'Know that to be indestructible ...' (2.17) and 'These bodies ... are said to have an

end' (2.18). How the imperishableness of the self is to be understood, Sri Krsna now teaches:

2.17 Know that the self in its essential nature is imperishable. The whole of insentient matter, which is different (from the self), is pervaded by the self. because of pervasiveness and extreme subtlety, the self cannot be destroyed; for every entity other than the self is capable of being pervaded by the self, and hence they are grosser than It. Destructive agents like weapons, water, wind, fire etc., pervade the substances to be destroyed and disintegrate them. Even hammers and such other instruments rouse wind through violent contact.with the objects and thereby destroy their objects. So, the essential nature of the self being subtler than anything else, It is imperishable. (The Lord) now says that the bodies are perishable:

2.18 The root 'dih' means 'to grow.' Hence these bodies (Dehas) are characterised by complexity. They have an end --- their nature is perishablity. For, jugs and such other things which are characterised by complexity are seen to have an end. The bodies of the embodied self, which are made of conglomerated elements, serve the purpose of experiencing the effects of Karmas, as stated in rh. U. IV. 4.5, 'Auspicious embodiments are got through good actions.' Such bodies perish when Karmas are exhausted. Further the self is imperishable. Why? because it is not measurable. Neither can It be conceived as the object of knowledge, but only as the subject (knower). It will be taught later on: 'He who knows It is called the knower of the Field by those who know this (13.1). besides, the self is not seen to be made up of many (elements). because in the perception 'I am the knower' throughout the body, only something other than the body is understood as possessing an invariable form as the knower. Further, this knower cannot be dismembered and seen in different places as is the case with the body. Therefore the self is eternal, for (1) It is not a complex being of a single form; (2) It is the knowing subject; and (3) It pervades all. On the contrary, the body is perishable, because (1) it is complex; (2) it serves the purpose of experiencing the fruits of Karma by the embodied self; (3) it has a plurality of parts and (4) it can be pervaded. Therefore, as the body is by nature perishable and the self by nature is eternal, both are not objects fit for grief.

Hence, bearing with courage the inevitable strike of weapons, sharp or hard, liable to be received by you and others, begin the action called war without being attached to the fruits but for the sake of attaining immortality.

2.19 With regard to This viz., the self, whose nature has been described above, he who thinks of It as the slayer, i.e., as the cause of slaying, and he who thinks 'This' (self) as slain by some cause or other --- both of them do not
know. As this self is eternal for the reasons mentioned above, no possible cause of destruction can slay It and for the same reason, It cannot be slain. Though the root 'han' (to slay) has the self for its object, it signifies causing the separation of the body from the self and not destruction of the self. Scriptural texts like 'You shall not cause injury to beings' and 'The brahmana shall not be killed'? (K. Sm. 8.2) indicate unsanctioned actions, causing separation of the body from the self. [In the above quotes, slaughter in an ethical sense is referred to, while the text refers to killing or separating the self from the body in a metaphsyical sense. This is made explicit in the following verse].

2.20 As the self is eternal for the reasons mentioned (above), and hence free from modifications, it is said that all the attributes of the insentient (body) like birth, death etc., never touch the self. In this connection, as the statement, 'It is never born, It never dies' is in the present tense, it should be understood that the birth and death which are experienced by all in all bodies, do not touch the self. The statement 'Having come into being once, It never ceases to be' means that this self, having emerged at the beginning of a Kalpa (one aeon of manifestation) will not cease to be at the end of the Kalpa (i.e., will emerge again at the beginning of the next Kalpa unless It is liberated). This is the meaning --- that birth at the beginning of a Kalpa in bodies such as those of brahman and others, and death at the end of a Kalpa as stated in the scriptures, do not touch the self. Hence, the selves in all bodies, are unborn, and therefore eternal. It is abiding, not connected, like matter, with invisible modifications taking place. It is primeval; the meaning is that It existed from time immemorial; It is even new i.e., It is capable of being experienced always as fresh. Therefore, when the body is slain the self is not slain.

2.21 He who knows the self to be eternal, as It is indestructible, unborn and changeless --- how can that person be said to cause the death of the self, be it of the self existing in the bodies of gods or animals or immovables? Whom does he kill? The meaning is --- how can he destroy any one or cause anyone to slay? How does he become an instrument for slaying? The meaning is this: the feeling of sorrow: 'I cause the slaying of these selves, I slay these,' has its basis solely in ignorance about the true nature of the self. Let it be granted that what is done is only separation of the bodies from the eternal selves. Even then, when the bodies, which are instruments for the experience of agreeable pleasures, perish, there still exists reason for sorrow in their separation from the bodies. To this (Sri Krsna) replies:

2.22 That those who give up their bodies in a righteous war get more beauteous bodies than before, is known through the scriptures. Casting off worn-out garments and taking new and beautiful ones, can be only a cause of joy, as seen here in the world in the case of new garments. Once again Sri Krsna emphasises for easy understanding the indestructibility of the self, taught before: 'Know that to be indestructible by which all this is pervaded' (II.17) and confirms it thus:

2.23 - 2.24 Weapons, fire, water and air are incapable of cleaving, burning, wetting and drying the self; for, the nature of the self is to pervade all elements; It is present everywhere; for, It is subtler than all the elements; It is not capable of being pervaded by them; and cleaving, burning, wetting and drying are actions which can take place only by pervading a substance. Therefore the self is eternal. It is stable, immovable and primeval. The meaning is that It is unchanging, unshakable and ancient.

2.25 The self is not made manifest by those Pramanas (means of knowledge) by which objects susceptible of being cleft etc., are made manifest; hence It is unmanifest, being different in kind from objects susceptible to cleaving etc., It is inconceivable, being different in kind from all objects. As It does not possess the essential nature of any of them. It cannot even be conceived. Therefore, It is unchanging, incapable of modifications. So

knowing this self to be possessed of the above mentioned qualities, it does not become you to feel.grief for Its sake.

2.26 Besides, if you consider this self as identical with the body, which is constantly born and constantly dies --- which is nothing other than these characteristics of the body mentioned above ---, even then it does not become you to feel grief; because, birth and death are inevitable for the body, whose nature is modification.

2.27 For what has originated, destruction is certain --- it is seen to be inevitable. Similarly what has perished will inevitably originate. How should this be understood --- that there is origination for that (entity)which has perished? It is seen that an existing entity only can originate and not a non-existent one. Origination, annihilation etc., are merely particular states of an existent entity. Now thread etc., do really exist. When arranged in a particular way, they are called clothes etc. It is seen that even those who uphold the doctrine that the effect is a new entity (Asatkarya-vadins) will admit this much that no new entity over and above the particular arrangement of threads is seen. It is not tenable to hold that this is the coming into being of a new entity, since, by the process of manufacture there is only attainment of a new name and special functions. No new entity emerges. Origination, annihilation etc., are thus particular stages of an existent entity. With regard to an entity which has entered into a stage known as origination, its entry into the opposite condition is called annihilation. Of an evolving entity, a seqence of evolutionary stages is inevitable. For instance, clay becomes a lump, jug, a potsherd, and (finally) powder. Here, what is called annihilation is the attainment of a succeeding stage by an entity which existed previously in a preceding stage. And this annihilation itself is called birth in that stage. Thus, the sequence called birth and annihilation being inevitable for an evolving entity, it is not worthy of you to grieve. Now Sri Krsna says that not even the slightest grief arising from seeing an entity passing from a previous existing stage to an opposite stage, is justifiable in regard to human beings etc.

2.28 Human beings etc., (i.e., bodies) exist as entities; their previous stages are unknown, their middle stages in the form of man etc., are known, and their.(final) and future stages are

unknown. As they thus exist in their own natural stages, there is no cause for grief. After thus saying that there is no cause for grief even according to the view which identifies the body with the self, Sri Krsna proceeds to say that it is hard to find one who can be said to have truly perceived the Atman or spoken about It or heard about It or gained a true conception of It by hearing. For the Atman, which is actually different from the body, is of a wonderful nature.

2.29 Among innumerable beings, someone, who by great austerity has got rid of sins and has increased his merits, realises this self possessing the above mentioned nature, which is wonderful and distinct in kind from all things other than Itself. Such a one speaks of It to another. Thus, someone hears of It. And even after hearing of It, no one knows It exactly that It really exists. The term 'ca' (and) implies that even amongst the seers, the speakers and hearers, one with authentic percepetion, authentic speech and authentic hearing, is a rarity.

2.30 The self within the body of everyone such as gods etc., must be considered to be eternally imperishable, though the body can be killed. Therefore, all beings from gods to immovable beings, even though they possess different forms, are all uniform and eternal in their nature as described above. The inequality and the perishableness pertain only to the bodies. Therefore, it is not fit for you to feel grief for any of the beings beginning from gods etc., and not merely for bhisma and such others.

2.31 Further, even though there is killing of life in this war which has begun, it is not fit for you to waver, considering your own duty, as in the Agnisomiya and other sacrifices involving slaughter. To a Ksatriya, there is no greater good than a righteous war, begun for a just cause. It will be declared in the Gita: 'Valour, non-defeat (by the enemies), fortitude, adroitness and also not fleeing from battle, generosity, lordliness --- these are the duties of the Ksatriya born of his very nature.' (18.43). In Agnisomiya etc., no injury is caused to the animal to be immolated; for, according to the Vedic Text, the victim, a he-goat, after abandoning an inferior body, will attain heaven etc., with a beautiful body..The Text pertaining to immolation declares: 'O animal, by this (immolation) you will never

die, you are not destroyed. You will pass through happy paths to the realm of the gods, where the virtuous only reach and not the sinful. May the god Savitr give you a proper place.' (Yaj. 4.6.9.46). Likewise the attainment of more beautiful bodies by those who die here in this war has been declared in the Gita, 'As a man casts off worn-out garments and takes others that are new ...' (2.22). Hence, just as lancing and such other operations of a surgeon are for curing a patient, the immolation of the sacrificial animal in the Agnisomiya etc., is only for its good.

2.32 Only the fortunate Ksatriyas, i.e., the meritorious ones, gian such a war as this, which has come unsought, which is the means for the attainment of immeasurable bliss, and which gives an unobstructed pathway to heaven.

2.33 If in delusion, you do not wage this war, which has started and which is the duty of a Ksatriya, then, owing to the non-performance of your immediate and incumbent duty, you will lose the immeasurable bliss which is the fruit of discharging your duty and the immeasurable fame which is the fruit of victory. In addition, you will incur extreme sin.

2.34 You will then incur not merely the loss of all happiness and honour but will be the object of disrespect by all people, the qualifies and even the unqualified, for all time. They will ridicule you saying, 'When the battle began, Arjuna ran away.' It it be asked, 'What if it be so?,

2.35 Great warriors like Karna, Duryodhana, etc., hitherto held you in high esteem as a heroic enemy. Now by refraining from battle when it has begun, you will appear to them as despicable and easily defeatable. These great warriors will think of you as withdrawing from battle out of fear. because turning away from battle does not happen in the case of brave enemies through affection etc., for relatives. It can happen only through fear of enemies.

2.36 Moreover, your enemies, the sons of Dhrtarastra, will make many remarks unutterably slanderous and disparaging to heroes, saying, 'How can this Partha stand in the presence of us, who are

heroes, even for a moment? His prowess is elsewhere than in our presence.' Can there be anything more painful to you than this? You yourself will understand that death is preferable to subjection to disparagement of this kind. Sri Krsna now says that for a hero, enemies being slain by oneself and oneself being slain by enemies are both conducive to supreme bliss.

2.37 If you are slain in a righteous war by enemies, you shall thereby attain supreme bliss. Or, slaying the enemies, you shall enjoy this kingdom without obstacles. As the duty called war, when done without attachment to the fruits, becomes the means for winning supreme bliss, you will attain that supreme bliss. Therefore, arise, assured that engagement in war (here the duty) is the means for attaining release, which is known as man's supreme goal. This alone is suitable for you, the son of Kunti. This is the purport. Sri Krsna then explains to the aspirant for liberation how to conduct oneself in war.

2.38 Thus, knowing the self to be eternal, different from the body and untouched by all corporeal qualities, remaining unaffected by pleasure and pain resulting from the weapon-strokes etc., inevitable in a war, as also by gain and loss of wealth, victory and defeat, and keeping yourself free from attachment to heaven and such other frutis, begin the battle considering it merely as your own duty. Thus, you will incur no sin. Here sin means transmigratory existence which is misery. The purport is that you will be liberarted from the bondage of transmigratory existence. Thus, after teaching the knowledge of the real nature of the self, Sri Krsna begins to expound the Yoga of work, which, when preceded by it (i.e., knowledge of the self), constitutes the means for liberation.

2.39 'Sankhya' means 'intellect,' and the truth about the Atman, which is determinable by the intellect, is 'Sankhyam'. Concerning the nature of the self which has to be known, whatever buddhi has to be taught, has been taught to you in the passage beginning with, 'It is not that I did not exist' (II.12) and.ending with the words, 'Therefore, you shall not grieve for any being' (II.30). The disposition of mind (buddhi) which is required for the performance of works preceded by knowledge of the self and which thus

constitutes the means of attaining release, that is here called by the term Yoga. It will be clearly told later on, 'Work done with desire for fruits is far inferior to work done with evennes of mind' (II. 49). What buddhi or attitude of mind is required for making your act deserve the name of Yoga, listen to it now. Endowed with that knowledge, you will be able to cast away the bondage of Karma. 'Karma-bandha' means the bondage due to Karma i.e., the bondage of Samsara. Now Sri Krsna explains the glory of works associated with the buddhi to be described hereafter:

2.40 Here, in Karma Yoga, there is no loss of 'Abhikrama' or of effort that has been put in; 'loss' means the loss of efficacy to bring about the fruits. In Karma Yoga if work is begun and left unfinished, and the continuity is broken in the middle, it does not remain fruitless, as in the case of works undertaken for their fruits. No evil result is acquired if the continuity of work is broken. Even a little of this Dharma known as Karma Yoga or Niskama Karma (unselfish action without desire for any reward) gives protection from the great fear, i.e., the fear of transmigratory existence. The same purport is explained later thus: 'Neither in this world nor the next, O Arjuna, there is annihilation for him' (6.40). but in works, Vedic and secular, when there is interruption in the middle, not only do they not yield fruits, but also there is accrual of evil. Now, Sri Krsna distinguishes the buddhi or mental disposition concerned with those acts which constitute a means for attaining release from those which are concerned with the acts meant for gaining the desired objects:

2.41 Here, i.e., in every ritual sanctioned by the scriptures, the buddhi or disposition of mind marked by resolution, is single. The buddhi marked by resolution is the buddhi concerned with acts which must be performed by one desirous of release (and not any kind of work). The term 'Vyavasaya' menas unshakable conviction: this buddhi (disposition of mind) comes out of prior determination about the true nature of the self. but the buddhi concerning the performance of rituals of fulfill certain desires, is marked by irresolution;.because here only this much knowledge of the self is sufficient --- 'the self (as an entity) exists differently from the body.' Such a general understanding is sufficient to qualify for performing acts giving fulfilment of certain desires. It does not require any

definite knowledge about the true nature of the self. For, even if there is no such knowledge, desires for heaven etc., can arise, the means for their attainment can be adopted, and the experience of those fruits can take place. For this reason there is no contradiction in the teaching of the scriptures. [The contradiction negated here is how can the same scriptural acts produce different results --- fulfilment of desires and liberation. The difference in the disposition of the mind accouts of it.] The buddhi (mental disposition) marked by resolution has a single aim, because it relates to the attainment of a single fruit. For, as far as one desiring release is concerned, all acts are enjoined only for the accomplishment of that single fruit. Therefore, since the purpose of the scriptures here is one only (i.e., liberation), the buddhi regarding all rituals taught in the scriptures too is only one, as far as liberation-seekers are concerned. For example, the set of six sacrifices, beginning with Agneya with all their subsidiary processes (though enjoined in different passages) forms the subject of a single injunction, as they are all for the attainment of a single fruit. Consequently the buddhi concerning these is one only. The meaning of the verse under discussion must be construed in the same manner. but the buddhi of the irresolute ones who are engaged in rituals for winning such fruits as heaven, sons, cattle, food etc., are endless, frutis being endless. In rituals like Darsapurnamasa (new moon and full moon sacrifice), even though attainment of a single fruit (heaven) is enjoined, there accrues to these the character of having many branches on account of the mention of many secondary fruits as evidenced by such passages as, 'He desires a long life.' Therefore the buddhi of irresolute ones has many branches and are endless. The purport is: In performing obligatory and occasional rituals, all fruits, primary and secondary, promised in the scriptures, should be abandoned, with the idea that release or salvation is the only purpose of all scripture-ordained rituals. These rituals should be performed without any thought of selfish gains. In addition, acts motivated by desires (Kamya-karmas) also should be performed according to one's own capacity, after abandoning all desire for fruits and with the conviction that they also, when performed in that way, form the means for attainment of release. They should be looked upon as equal to obligatory and occasional rites suited to one's own station

and stage in life. Sri Krsna condemns those who perform acts for the attainment of objects of desire:

2.42 - 2.44 The ignorant, whose knowledge is little, and who have as their sole aim the attainment of enjoyment and power, speak the flowery language i.e., having its flowers (show) only as fruits, which look apparently beautiful at first sight. They rejoice in the letter of the Vedas i.e., they are attached to heaven and such other results (promised in the Karma-kanda of the Vedas). They say that there is nothing else, owing to their intense attachment to these results. They say that there is no fruit superior to heaven etc. They are full of worldly desires and their minds are highly attached to secular desires. They hanker for heaven, i.e. think of the enjoyment of the felicities of heaven, after which one can again have rebirth which offers again the opportunity to perform varied rites devoid of true knowledge and leads towards the attainment of enjoyments and power once again. With regard to those who cling to pleasure and power and whose understanding is contaminated by that flowery speech relating to pleasure and lordly powers, the aforesaid mental disposition characterised by resolution, will not arise in their Samadhi. Samadhi here means the mind. The knowledge of the self will not arise in such minds. In the minds of these persons, there cannot arise the mental disposition that looks on all Vedic rituals as means for liberation based on the determined conviction about the real form of the self. Hence, in an aspirant for liberation, there should be no attachment to rituals out of the conviction that they are meant for the acquisition of objects of desire only. It may be questioned why the Vedas, which have more of love for Jivas than thousands of parents, and which are endeavouring to save the Jivas, should prescribe in this way rites whose fruits are infinitesimal and which produce only new births. It can also be asked if it is proper to abandon what is given in the Vedas. Sri Krsna replies to these questions.

2.45 The word Traigunya means the three Gunas --- Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Here the term Traigunya denotes persons in whom Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are in abundance. The Vedas in prescribing desire-oriented rituals (Kamya-karmas) have such persons in view. because of their great love, the Vedas teach what is good to those in whom Tamas, Rajas and Sattva preponderate.

If the Vedas had not explained to these persons the means for the attainment of heaven etc., according to the Gunas, then those persons who are not interested in liberation owing to absence of Sattva and preponderance of Rajas and Tamas in them, would get completely lost amidst what should not be resorted to, without knowing the means for attaining the results they desire. Hence the Vedas are concerned with the Gunas. be you free from the three Gunas. Try to acquire Sattva in abundance; increase that alone. The purport is: do not nurse the preponderance of the three Gunas in their state of inter-mixture; do not cultivate such preponderance. Be free from the pairs of opposites; be free from all the characteristics of worldly life. Abide in pure Sattva; be established in Sattva, in its state of purity without the.admixture of the other two Gunas. If it is questioned how that is possible, the reply is as follows. Never care to acquire things nor protect what has been acquired. While abandoning the acquisition of what is not required for self-realisation, abandon also the conservation of such things already acquired. You can thus be established in self-control and thereby become an aspirant after the essentail nature of the self. 'Yoga' is acquisition of what has not been acquired; 'Ksema' is preservation of things already acquired. Abandoning these is a must for an aspirant after the essential nature of the self. If you conduct yourself in this way, the preponderance of Rajas and Tamas will be annihilated, and pure Sattva will develop. besides, all that is taught in the Vedas is not fit to be utilised by all.

2.46 Whatever use, a thirsty person has for a reservoir, which is flooded with water on all sides and which has been constructed for all kinds of purposes like irrigation, only to that extent of it, i.e., enough to drink will be of use to the thirsty person and not all the water. Likewise, whatever in all the Vedas from the means for release to a knowing brahmana, i.e., one who is established in the study of the Vedas and who aspires for release only to that extent is it to be accepted by him and not anything else. Sri Krsna now says that this much alone is to be accepted by an aspirant, established in Sattva:

2.47 As for obligatory, occasional and desiderative acts taught in the Vedas and associated with some result or other, you, an aspirant established in Sattva, have the right only to perform them:

You have no right to the fruits known to be derived from such acts. Acts done with a desire for fruit bring about bondage. but acts done without an eye on fruits form My worship and become a means for release. Do not become an agent of acts with the idea of being the reaper of their fruits. Even when you, who are established in pure Sattva and are desrious of release, perform acts, you should not look upon yourself as the agent. Likewise, it is necessary to contemplate yourself as not being the cause of even appeasing hunger and such other bodily necessities. Later on it will be said that both of these, agency of action and desire for fruits, should be considered as belonging to Gunas, or in the alternative to Me who am the Lord of all. Thinking thus, do work. With regard to inaction, i.e.,.abstaining from performance of duties, as when you said, 'I will not fight,' let there be no attachment to such inaction in you. The meaning is let your interest be only in the discharge of such obligatory duties like this war in the manner described above. Sri Krsna makes this clear in the following verse:

2.48 Abandoning the attachment to kingdom, relatives etc., and established in Yoga, engage in war and such other activities. Perform these with equanimity as regards success and failure resulting from victory etc., which are inherent in them. This equanimity with regard to success and failure is called here by the term Yoga, in the expression 'established in Yoga.' Yoga is equanimity of mind which takes the form of evenness in success and failure. Sri Krsna explains why this is repeatedly said:

2.49 All other kinds of action are far inferior to those done with evenness of mind, which consists in the renunciation of the main result and with equanimity towards success or failure in respect of the secondary results. Between the two kinds of actions, the one with equanimity and the other with attachment, the former associated with equanimity removes all the sufferings of Samsara and leads to release which is the highest object of human existence. The latter type of actions, which is pursued with an eye on results, leads one to Samsara whose character is endless suffering. Thus when an act is being done, take refuge in buddhi (evenness of mind). Refuge means abode. Live in that buddhi, is the meaning. 'Miserable are they who act with a motive for results':

it means, 'Those who act with attachment to the results, etc., are miserable, as they will continue in Samsara.'

2.50 He, who is established in evenness of mind in the performance of actions, relinquishes good and evil Karmas which have accumulated from time immemorial causing bondage endlessly. Therefore acquire this aforesaid evenness of mind (buddhi Yoga). Yoga is skill in action. That is, this evenness of mind when one is engaged in action, is possible through great skill, i.e., ability.

2.51 Those who possess this evenness of mind while performing actions and relinquish their fruits, are freed from the bondage of rebirth, and go to the region beyond all ills. 'Hi' means that this dictum or teaching is well known in all the Upanisads.

2.52 If you act in this manner and get freed from impurities, your intellect will pass beyond the tangle of delusion. The dense impurity of sin is the nature of that delusion which generates attachment to infinitesimal results, of which you have already heard much from us and will hear more later on. You will then immediately feel, of your own accord, renunciation or feeling of disgust for them all. Sri Krsna now teaches the goal called self-realisation (Yoga) which results from the performance of duty as taught in the passage beginning with 'Now, listen to this with regard to Karma Yoga' (2.39) which is based on the knowledge of the real nature of the self gained through the refinement of the mind.

2.53 Here 'Sruti' means hearing (and not the Veda). When your intellect, which, by hearing from us, has become specially enlightened, having for its object the eternal, unsurpassed and subtle self --- which belongs to a class different from all other entities ---, then the intellect is firmly fixed, i.e., in a single psychosis and stands unshaken. In such a concentrated mind, purified by the performance of duties without attachment, will be generated true Yoga, which consists in the vision of the self. What is said is this: Karma Yoga, which presupposes the knowledge of the real nature of the self obtained from the scriptures, leads to a firm devotion to knowledge known as the state of firm wisdom; and

the state of ’firm wisdom;’ which is in the form of devotion to knowledge, generates the vision of the self; this vision is here called Yoga.

Arjuna, thus taught, questions about the nature of ’firm wisdom’ which constitutes the means for the attainment of Yoga and which itself is attainable through Karma Yoga which consists in work with detachment, and also about the mode of behaviour of a man of ’firm wisdom.’

2.54 Arjuna said -- What is the speech of a man of firm wisdom who is abiding with the mind controlled? What words can describe his state? What is his.nature? This is the meaning of ’How does a man of firm wisdom speak etc.?’

His specific conduct is now described as his nature can be inferred therefrom.

2.55 The Lord said -- When a person is satisfied in himself with himself, i.e. when his mind depends on the self within himself; and being content with that, expels all the desires of the mind which are different from that state of mind --- then he is said to be a man of firm wisdom. This is the highest form of devotion of knowledge. Then, the lower state, not far below it, of one established in firm wisdom, is described:

2.56 Even when there are reasons for grief like separation from beloved ones, his mind is not perturbed, i.e., he is not aggrieved. He has no longing to enjoy pleasures, i.e., even though the things which he likes are near him, he has no longing for them. He is free from desire and anger; desire is longing for objects not yet obtained; he is free from this. Fear is affliction produced from the knowledge of the factors which cause separation from the beloved or from meeting with that which is not desirable; he is free from this. Anger is a disturbed state of one’s own mind which produces affliction and which is aimed at another sentient being who is the cause of separation from the beloved or of confrontation with what is not desirable. He is free from this. A sage of this sort, who constantly meditates on the self, is said to be of firm wisdom. Then, the next state below this is described:

2.57 He, who, has no love for all pleasing objects, i.e., who is indifferent to them, and who does not feel attraction or repulsion when he is united with or separated from attractive or repulsive objects respectively, who neither rejoices at the former, nor hates the latter --- he also is of firm wisdom. Sri Krsna now mentions the next lower state.

2.58 When one is able to draw the senses away from the sense-objects on every side when the senses try to contact the sense-objects, just as a tortoise draws in its limbs, and is capable of fixing his mind on the self --- he too is of firm wisdom. Thus there are four stages of devotion to knowledge, each stage.being perfected through the succeeding stage. Now Sri Krsna speaks of the difficulty of the attainment of firm devotion to knowledge and the means of that attainment.

2.59 The sense objects are the food of the senses. From the abstinent embodied being, i.e., from one who has withdrawn his senses from objects, these sense-objects, being rejected by him, turn away, but not the relish for them. Relish means hankering. The meaning is that the hankering for the sense-objects does not go away by abstinence alone. but even this hankering will go away, when one sees that the essential nature of the self is superior to the sense-objects and that the realisation of this self gives greater happiness than the enjoyment of sense-objects.

2.60 Except by the experience of the self, the hankering for objects will not go away. When the hankering for the sense-objects does not go away, the senses of even a wise man, though he is ever striving to subdue them, become refractory, i.e., become violent and carry away perforce the mind. Thus, the subduing of the senses depends on the vision of the self, and the vision of the self depends on the subduing of the senses. Consequently, i.e., because of this mutual dependence, firm devotion to knowledge is difficult to achieve.

2.61 With a desire to overcome this mutual dependence between the subduing of the senses and vision of the self, one has to conquer the senses which are difficult to subdue on account of their attachment to sense-objects. So, focussing the mind on Me

who am the only auspicious object for meditation, let him remain steadfast. When the mind is focussed on Me as its object, then such a mind, purified by the burning away of all impurities and devoid of attachment to the senses, is able to control the senses. Then the mind with the senses under control will be able to experience the self. As said in Visnu Purana, 'As the leaping fire fanned by the wind burns away a forest of dry trees, so Visnu, who is in the hearts of all the Yogins, destroys all the sins.' Sri Krsna teaches the same here: 'He whose senses are under control, his knowledge is firmly set.' Sri Krsna says: 'One who endeavours to subdue the.senses, depending on one's own exertions, and does not focus the mind on Me in this way, becomes lost.'

2.62 Indeed, in respect of a person, whose attachment to sense-objects is expelled but whose mind is not focussed on Me, even though he controls the senses, contemplation on sense-objects is unavoidable on account of the impressions of sins from time immemorial. Again attachment increases fully in 'a man who thinks about sense-objects'. From attachment arises desire.' What is called 'desire' is the further stage of attachment. After reaching that stage, it is not possible for a man to stay without experiencing the sense-objects. 'From such desire arises anger.' When a desire exists without its object being nearby, anger arises against persons nearby under the following. 'Our desire is thwarted by these persons.' 'From anger there comes delusion'. Delusion is want of discrimination between what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. Not possessing that discrimination one does anything and everything. Then there follows the failure of memory, i.e., of the impressions of the earlier efforts of sense control, when one strives again to control the senses.

2.63 'From the loss of memory there comes the destruction of discrimination.' The meaning is that there will be destruction of the effect of efforts made earlier to attain the knowledge of the self. From the destruction of discrimination, one becomes lost, i.e., is sunk in Samsara or worldliness.

2.64 Having focussed, in the way already described, the mind on Me --- the Lord of all and the auspicious object of meditation, he who goes through, i.e., considers with contempt the sense-objects,

with senses under control and free from hate and attraction by reason of all impurities of mind being burnt out --- such a person has a disciplined self, i.e., disciplined mind. He attains serenity. The meaning is that his mind will be free of impurities.

2.65 When the mind of this person gets serene, he gets rid of all sorrows originating from contact with matter. For, in respect of the peson whose mind is serene, i.e., is free from the evil which is antagonistic to the vision of the.self, the buddhi, having the pure self for its object, becomes established immediately. Thus, when the mind is serene, the loss of all sorrow surely arises.

2.66 In him who does not focus his mind on Me but is engaged only in the control of senses by his own exertion, the buddhi or the right disposition that is concerned with the pure self never arises. Therefore he fails in the practice of meditation on the self. In one who cannot think of the pure self, there arises the desire for sense objects; in him serenity does not arise. How can eternal and unsurpassed bliss be generated in him who is not serene but is attached to sense-objects? [The idea is that without the aid of devotion to God, the effort to control the senses by one's will power alone will end in failure.] Sri Krsna speaks again of the calamity that befalls one who does not practise the control of the senses in the way prescribed above:

2.67 That mind, which is allowed by a person to be submissive to, i.e., allowed to go after the senses which go on operating, i.e., experiencing sense-objects, such a mind loses its inclination towards the pure self. The meaning is that it gets inclined towards sense-objects. Just as a contrary wind forcibly carries away a ship moving on the waters, in the name manner wisdon also is carried away from such a mind. [The idea is that the pursuit of sense pleasures dulls one's spiritual inclination, and the mind ultimately succumbs to them unresisting.]

2.68 Therefore, in the way described above, he whose mind is focussed on Me the auspicious object for meditation, and whose senses are thereby restrained from sense-objects in everyway, in his mind alone wisdom is firmly set. Sri Krsna now speaks of the

state of attainment by one whose senses are subdued and whose mind is serene.

2.69 That buddhi (understanding) which has the self for its object, is night to all beings, i.e., is obscure like night to all. but he, who has subdued the senses and is serene, is awake in respect of the self. The meaning is that he has the vision of the self. All beings are awake, i.e., are actively cognisant in respect of.objects of the senses like sound. but such sense objects are like things enshrouded by night to the sage who is awake to the self.

2.70 The river waters enter into the sea which is full by itself and is thus the same, i.e., unchanging in shape. The sea exhibits no special increase or decrease, whether the waters or rivers enter it or not. Even so do all objects of desire, i.e., objects of sense perception like sound etc., enter into a self-controlled one, i.e., they produce only sensorial impressions but no reaction from him. Such a person will attain peace. The meaning is that he alone attains to peace, who by reason of the contentment coming from the vision of the self, feels no disturbance when objects of sense like sound, etc., come within the ken of the senses or when they do not come. This is not the case with one who runs after desires. Whoever is agitated by sound and other objects, never attains to peace.

2.71 What are desired, they are called the objects of desire. These are sound and other sense-objects. The person, who wants peace must abandon all sense-objects such as sound, touch etc. He should have no longing for them. He should be without the sense of 'mineness' regarding them, as that sense arises from the misconception that the body, which is really non-self, is the self. He who lives in this way attains to peace after seeing the self.

2.72 This state of performing disinterested work which is preceded by the knowledge of the eternal self and which is characterised by firm wisdom, is the brahmi-state, which secures the attainment of the brahman (the self). After attaining such a state, he will not be deluded, i.e., he will not get again the mortal coil. Reaching this state even during the last years of life, he wins the blissful brahman (the self) i.e., which is full of beatitude. The meaning is

that he attains the self which is constituted of nothing but bliss. Thus in the second chapter, the Lord wanted to remove the delusion of Arjuna, who did not know the real nature of the self and also did not realize that the activity named 'war' (here an ordained duty) is a means for attaining the nature of Sankhya or the self. Arjuna was under the delusion that the body is itself the self, and dominated by that delusion, had retreated from battle. He was therefore taught.the knowledge called 'Sankhya' or the understanding of the self, and Yoga or what is called the path of practical work without attachment. These together have as their objective the attainment of steady wisdom (Sthitaprajnata) This has been explained in the following verse by Sri Yamunacarya: Sankhya and Yoga, which comprehend within their scope the understanding of the eternal self and the practical way of disinterested action respectively, were imparted in order to remove Arjuna's delusion. Through them the state of firm wisdom can be reached.

BHAGAVADGITA

English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda

Chapter 3

3.1 ' Arjuna said -- If you consider that knowledge is superior to works, why do you engage me in this terrible deed?' What is said here is this: If the firm adherence to knowledge is the only means to the vision of the self, then how can one accept the idea that devotion to works (Karma) leads to it? It was said before that this firm devotion to knowledge, which forms the means for the vision of the self, could arise by the cessation of the activities of all the senses and the mind in relation to their respective objects such as sound. If the vision of the self is to be attained, which arises by the cessation of the activities of the senses, I should be guided to engage myself solely to acquire firm devotion to knowledge, which is preceded by the abandoning of all works. For what purpose, then, do you engage me in this terrible deed, which consists in the activities of all the senses, and is thus an obstacle for the vision of the self?

3.2 Consequently, it appears to me as if ' you confuse me with statements that seem to contradict each other.' For, firm devotion to knowledge which forms the means for the vision of the self and which is of the nature of stopping the operations of the senses on the one hand, and on the other exhortation to action which is of a nature opposite to it, i.e., knowledge, as a means to the same vision of that Atman --- these statements are contradictory and confusing. Therefore tell me clearly the path following which I can take a determined course and win the Supreme eing.

3.3 The Lord said -- You have not properly understood what I taught you before. In this world, full of people with varying degrees of qualifications, I have taught in the days of yore two ways, that of knowledge (Jnana Yoga) and that of works, according to the qualifications of aspirants. There is no contradiction in this. It is not possible for all people of the world in whom the desire for release has arisen, to become capable immediately for the practice of Jnana Yoga. ut he who performs the worship of the Supreme Person without desire

for fruits and thereby gets completely rid of inner impurities and keeps his senses unagitated --- he becomes competent for the path of knowledge. That all activities are for performing the worship of the Supreme Person will be taught in the Gita verse, ' He from `whom the activities of all beings arise and by whom all this is pervaded --- by worshipping Him with his duty man reaches perfection' (18.46). Earlier also performance of activities without any attachment to the fruits is enjoined by the verse beginning with. ' You have the right to work alone ...' (2.47). Next for those whose intellect has been redeemed by this kind of discipline, is enjoined Jnana Yoga by the words, ' When a man renounces all the desires ...' (2.55). Consequently, firm devotion to Jnana Yoga is taught only to the Sankhyas, i.e., those persons who are competent to follow the discipline of the knowledge of the self, and Karma Yoga to Yogins, i.e., to those competent for the path of work. Sankhya means uddhi and those who are endowed with the uddhi (intellectual or mental disposition) having only the self for its object, are Sankhyans. Therefore those who are not fit for this are qualified for Karma Yoga. Those who are possessed of uddhi which is agitated by objects of the senses, are the persons qualified for Karma Yoga, whereas those whose uddhi is not thus agitated, are qualified for Jnana Yoga. Therefore nothing contradictory and confusing is taught. It is said in the next stanza that Jnana Yoga is difficult to practise all at once, even when the desire for release arises in any worldy person:

3.4 Not by non-performance of the acts prescribed by the scriptures, does a person attain freedom from Karma, i.e., Jnana Yoga; nor by ceasing to perform such actions as are prescribed in the scriptures and are already begun by him. For, success is achieved by actions done without attachment to the fruits and by way of worshipping the Supreme Person. Hence devoid of it (Karma-nistha), one does not achieve Jnana-nistha. y those persons who have not worshipped Govinda by acts done without attachment to fruits and whose beginningless and endless accumulation of evil has not been annulled thereby, constant contemplation on the self is not possible. It can be done only if it is preceded by the attainment of a state in which the operation of the senses have been freed from disturbance. This view is put forward by the Lord:

3.5 In this world, no man can rest without doing work; for every person, even though he may have determined, ' I will not do anything,' is caused to act, i.e., is compelled to act according to the Gunas born of Prakrti. The Gunas are Sattva, Rajas and Tamas which increase in accordance with his old Karma. Consequently, Jnana Yoga can be attained only by means of a purified inner organ after annulling the old accumulation of sins by means of Karma Yoga of the aforesaid characteristics and bringing Sattva and other Gunas under control. Otherwise, one who engages oneself in Jnana Yoga becomes a hypocrite:

3.6 He whose inner and outer organs of senses are not conquered because of his sins not being annulled but is none the less struggling for winning knowledge of the self, whose mind is forced to turn away from the self by reason of it being attached to sense objects, and who consequently lets his minds dwell on them --- he is called a hypocrite, because his actions are at variance with his professions. The meaning is that by practising the knowledge of the self in this way, he becomes perverted and lost.

3.7 Consequently, he who, with aspiration to have the vision of the self, directs his senses to action according to the scriptures, such action being of the same class as those which he practised earlier, and who then begins to practise Karma Yoga, after renouncing attachment, with the senses which are naturally inclined to action --- he, by reason of there being no chance of errors, excels a man following Jnana Yoga, because there is no fear of a fall in his case.

3.8 ' Obligatory' (Niyatam) means ' concomitant' (Vyaptam); for action is concomitant with that which is conjoined with Prakrti or the body. The contact with Prakrti has arisen from beginingless subtle impressions (Vasanas). You must perform work, because the performance of action is easy and may not cause accidents by reason of its being obligatory. Action is superior to non-action, i.e., even to the devotee of Jnana. ecause of the instruction at the beginning (of this context), ' No man experiences freedom from activity' (3.4), devotion to Jnana alone is indicated by the word, ' Non-action' (Akarma). Even in the case of one qualified for devotion to Jnana, devotion to Karma indeed is

better because Jnana-nistha is difficult to perform and liable to accidents, as it has not been practised previoulsy and as it does not come to one naturally. Subsequently it will be described how, one with the knowledge of the true nature of the self can carry on actions along with that knowledge. Consequently, we should take the meaning here to be that, because knowledge of the self too is included in Karma Yoga, this kind of Yoga is superior. This statement on the superiority of activity (Karma Yoga) over Jnana Yoga is valid even when there is competency for one to adopt Jnana Yoga. For, if you abandon all activities to qualify yourself for Jnana Yoga, then, for you, who is thus inactive while following Jnana Yoga, even the nourishment of the body, which is necessary even for Jnana-nistha, will not be achieved. The body has to be necessarily sustained until the means are executed to the full. Performing ' great sacrifices' with the help of honestly earned wealth, the body should be sustained by consuming the remainders left after such sacrifices. This is made clear from scriptural texts like, ' When the food is pure, the Sattva (mind or inner organ) becomes pure; when the Sattva is pure, then the remembrance (meditation) will be steady' (Cha. U., 7.26.2). Sri Krsna himself will declare: ' The sinful ones who cook food for their own sake eat sin (3.13). Consequently,even the sustenance of the body will not be possible in the case of one who practises Jnana-nistha, and does not act. In other ways also Karma Yoga is superior to Jnana Yoga even in respect of one who is qualified for Jnana-nistha; for, obligatory and occasional rites like the ' great sacrifices' must be carried out by one who follows Jnana Yoga too, as he has to sustain the body until he attains perfection. esides, the understanding of the true nature of the self is incorporated in Karma Yoga, as it involves the contemplation of the self as being a non-agent. It is also in line with the nature of life (Prakrti). Karma Yoga, is for these reasons easier and it is free from danger of downfall. Therefore, you must perform Karma Yoga only. This is the purport of the verse. If it is contended that any action such as earning money implies ' I-ness' , ' My-ness' etc., and will therefore be disturbing to the senses, and that such a person devoted often to works will be in bondage through subtle impressions of his acts, Sri Krsna says:

3.9 The world is imprisoned by the bond of work only when work is done for personal ends, but not when work is performed or money acquired for the purpose of sacrifice etc. prescribed in the scriptures. So, for the purpose of sacrifice, you must perform acts like the acquisition of money. In doing so, overcome attachments generated by the pursuit of personal ambitions, and then do your work in the spirit of Yajna. When a person free from attachment does the work for the sake of sacrifices etc., the Supreme Person, propitiated by sacrifices etc., grants him the calm vision of the self after destroying the subtle impressions of his Karmas, which have continued from time without beginning. Sri Krsna stresses the need for sustenance of the body solely by the remnants of sacrifices in respect of those who are devoted to all ends of human life. He decries the sin of those who nourish the body by things other than the remnants of sacrifices:

3.10 As there is the scriptural text beginning with ' The Lord of Universe' (Tai. Na., 11.3), it is justifiable to take the term Prajapati in its wider connotation and interpret it to mean Narayana who is the Lord of all beings, the creator of the universe and the Self of the universe. In the beginning, i.e., during the creation, He, the Lord of beings, saw all beings helpless by their conjunction with beginningless non-conscient matter, bereft of the distinctions of name and form, and submerged in Himself. They were incapable of attaining the major ends of human existence, being almost one with non-conscient matter. He, the supremely compassionate, with a desire to resuscitate them, created them together with sacrifice in order that they might perform sacrifices as His worship and said: ' y this sacrifice, shall you prosper,' i.e., multiply and prosper. May this sacrifice fulfil your supreme object of desire called release (Moksa) and also the other desires that are in conformity with it. How, then, should this be done?

3.11 ' y this,' i.e., by this sacrifice, you propitiate the gods who form My body and have Me as their Self. For Sri Krsna will say later on: ' For I am the only enjoyer and the only Lord of Sacrifices' (9.24). Worshipped by sacrifices, may these gods, who have Me as their Self, nourish you with food, drink etc., which are required also for their worship. Thus, supporting each other, may you

attain the highest good called Moksa (release).

3.12 ' Pleased by the sacrifice,' i.e., propitiated by the sacrifice, the gods, who have Me as their Self, will bestow on you the enjoyments you desire. Whatever objects are desired by persons keen on attaining release, the supreme end of human endeavour, all those will be granted by gods previously worshipped through many sacrifices. That is, whatever is solicited with more and more propitiation, all those enjoyments they will bestow on you. Whoever enjoys the objects of enjoyment granted by them for the purpose of worshipping them, without giving them their due share in return --- he is verily a thief. What is called ' theft' is indeed taking what belongs to another as one' s own and using it for oneself, when it is really designed for the purpose of another. The purport is that such a person becomes unfit not only for the supreme end of human endeavour, but also will go down towards purgatory (Naraka). Sri Krsna expands the same:

3.13 Those persons who acquire food materials solely for propitiating the Supreme Person abiding as the Self of Indra and other deities, and who, after cooking them, propitiate, through them, the Supreme Person as He is, and then sustain themselves on the remnants of oblations (made for such propitiation), they alone will be free of impurities which have resulted from beginningless evil and which are inimical to the vision of the self. ut they are evil-minded, who acquire for selfish use the things which the Supreme eing, abiding as the Self of Indra and other deities, has granted them for worshipping Him with, and use it all on the other hand for feeding themselves --- they eat only sin. Turning away from the vision of the self, they cook only for being led to Naraka (for the expiation of the sin incurred thereby). Sri Krsna says that, from the standpoint of the world as well as that of the scriptures, everything has its origin in sacrifice; and He speaks of the need for the performance of the sacrifices and of the blemish in not performing the same:

3.14 From food arise all beings; from rain food is produced. These two facts are matters of common experience. ' From sacrifice comes rain' this is known from the scriptures such as, ' The oblations offered in fire reach the sun, and

from the sun comes rain' (Manu, 6.76), and sacrifice is born out of activities in the form of collecting materials, etc., by the agent. And activity arises from ' rahman' , the body born of Prakrti.

3.15 Here ther term, ' rahman' connotes the physical body consisting of modifications of the Prakrti; for the Prakrti is denoted here by the term ' rahman' , as in the scriptural text: ' From Him arises, this rahman and this ' rahman' becomes name, form and food' (Mun. U., 1.1.9). Here also it will be said by Sri Krsna: ' This great ' rahman' is my womb' (14.3). Therefore, the words that ' Activity springs from ' rahman' teaches that activity is produced by the physical body which is of the nature of the modification of Prakrti. The ' rahman' arises from the imperishable self. Here the term, ' imperishable' , indicates the individual self. The physical body, which is inhabited by the self who is satisfied by food and drink, is fit for action; hence the physical body which constitutes the instrument of activity is said to be from the imperishable. Therefore the ' all-pervading rahman' means here the bodies of all persons of diverse kinds which are the products of Prakrti which comprises all material entities, and is hence all-pervading. They, the bodies, are established in sacrifice. The meanig is that the bodies have roots in sacrifice.

3.16 Thus this wheel is set in motion by the Supreme Person: From food arise embodied selves which are denoted by the word ' beings' : from rain food; from sacrifice rain; sacrifice from activities which constitute the exercise of an agent; and activity from the embodied self; and again the body endowed with life from food. In this manner there is a sequence which revolves like a wheel through the mutual relations of cause and effect. Hence, He who is engaged in spiritual practice --- whether one is qualified for Karma Yoga or Jnana Yoga --- if he does not follow, i.e., does not keep in motion the wheel which revolves in a circle through mutual relation of cause and effect --- that person by not maintaining his bodily subsistence by means of the ' remainder of sacrifice,' lives in sin. His life begins in sin or develops in sin, or is of both these kinds; he lives the life of sin. Thus he is a reveller in his senses and not in his self. The senses become the pleasure-gardens of one whose mind and body are not nourished by the ' remainders of sacrifices.' Rajas and Tamas preponderate in

his body. eing thus turned away from the vision of the self, he rejoices only in the enjoyment of the senses. Therefore, even if he were to attempt for the vision of the self, it will be fruitless. So he lives in vain, O Arjuna. Sri Krsna now says that there is no need for the performance of the ' great sacrifices' etc., according to his station and stage of life, only in respect of a liberated person whose vision of the self does not depend on any external means.

3.17 ut for him, who is not in need of the means of Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga, who finds delight in the self on his own, i.e., who is established in the self, who is satisfied by the self alone and not by food, drink and other things which are other than the self, who rejoices in the self alone and not in pleasure gardens, garlands, sandalpaste, vocal and instrumental music etc., and for whom everything, his subsistence, nourishment and enjoyment, is the self alone --- for him nothing remains to be performed for the vision of the self, because the essential nature of the self is perpetually in his unaided vision.

3.18 Thus, for such a one there is no purpose, i.e., nothing to be gained from work done as a means for the vision of the self, nor is he subject to any evil or calamity from work left undone, because his vision of the self does not rest on any external means. To such a person who has turned by himself away from non-intelligent matter which is different from the self, there is nothing acceptable as a purpose to be gained from the constituents of Prakrti and their products; only if there were such a purpose, there would be the need for the means of retreat therefrom. For, the adoption of the means is only for effecting such a retreat. ut he is verily liberated. Non-pursuit of the means for vision of the self is only for that person whose vision of the self no longer depends on any means. ut Karma Yoga is better in gaining the vision of the self for one who is in pursuit of the means for that vision, because it is easy to perfom, because it is secure from possible error, because the contemplation of the true nature of the self is included in it, and because even for a Jnana Yogin the performance of minimum activity is necessary. For these reasons, Karma Yoga is better as a means for the vision of the Atman.

3.19 Therefore, considering that work has to be performed with detachment, you perform it, considering yourself a non-agent. This will be declared in the words ' with detachment' and ' which ought to be done,' meaning that one attains the Supreme by Karma Yoga itself.

3.20 It is also declared that Karma Yoga alone Janaka and others reached perfection. ecause, Karma Yoga is the best means for securing the vision of the self even for a person who is qualified for Jnana Yoga, royal sages like Janaka and others, who are foremost among the Jnanins, preferred Karma Yoga as the means for attaining perfection. Thus, having first declared previously that Karma Yoga must be practised by an aspirant for release who is qualified for Karma Yoga alone, as he is unfit for Jnana Yoga, it was next stated with reasons that, even for one who is qualified for Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga is better than Jnana Yoga Now it is going to be declared (in verses 20-26) that Karma Yoga must be performed in every way by one who is virtuous. At least for the guidance of the world, you should do work even if there is no need of it for yourself.

3.21 Whatever ' an eminent man,' i.e., he, who is famous for his knowledge of all the scriptures and for his observance of the scriptural dictates, performs, others who have incomplete knowledge of the scriptures will also perform, following his example. With regard to any duty which is being performed with all its ancillaries by an eminent personage, the people with incomplete knowledge will do it with the same ancillaries. Therefore for the protection of the world, all acts that are appropriate to one' s station and stage in life must always be performed by an eminent man who is distinguished for his wisdom. Otherwise, the evil generated from the ruin of the large masses of the world (who neglect their duties by following his example), will bring him down, even if he were a follower of pure Jnana Yoga.

3.22 For Me, who is the Lord of all, who has all desires fulfilled, who is omniscient, whose will is always true, and who, at My own will, remains in the three worlds in the forms of gods, men and such other beings, there is nothing whatever to achieve. Therefore though there is for Me nothing ' unacquired' ,

i.e., nothing yet to be acquired by work, I go on working for the protection of the world.

3.23 If I, the Lord of all, whose will is always true, whose sport consists in creation, sustentation and dissolution of universe at My will, even though I am born at My pleasure as a man to help the world --- if, I thus incarnating in the family of Vasudeva who is the foremost among virtuous men, did not contine to work unwearied at all times suitable to that family, then, these men with incomplete knowledge would follow My path, thinking that the way adopted by the son of virtuous Vasudeva alone is the real way. And in place of winning the self, they would go to Naraka because of their failure to do what ought to be done and also because of the sin arising from non-performance of duty.

3.24 If I do not do the work suitable to My station in life, likewise all the virtuous men also, neglecting their duties by following My example, would be destroyed on account of not performing their duties. That is, they will become lost. Thus I would be bringing about chaos among all virtuous men on account of My failure to conduct Myself as prescribed in the scriptures. Therefore I would be destroying all these people. Even so, if you, Arjuna, a son of Pandu and a brother of Yudhisthira and the foremost of the virtuous, claim to be qualified for Jnana Yoga, then the virtuous aspirants, who do not know everything and who follow your way, without knowing their own competency, would give up practising Karma Yoga and will be lost. Therefore work should be done by one who is recognised as learned and worthy.

3.25 ' The ignorant' are those people who do not know the entire truth about the self; ' attached to their work' means they are inseparably yoked to work. ecause of their incomplete knowledge of the self, they are not qualified for Jnana Yoga which is of the nature of practising knowledge of the self. They are qualified for Karma Yoga only. As they should practise Karma Yoga for the vision of the self in the same manner Karma Yoga should be practised by one who is recognised as virtuous, who is unattached to work by reason of the vision of the self, and who wishes that his conduct should give guidance to others in virtuous conduct. In this way he should protect the world from chaos

by his example. Such a person, even though qualified for Jnana Yoga, should practice Karma Yoga.

3.26 Do not bewilder the minds of ignorant aspirants by saying that there is, besides Karma Yoga, another way to the vision of the self. They cannot practise Jnana Yoga on account of their incomplete knowledge of the self, and attachment to action. They are qualified for Karma Yoga because of their being fit only for activity on account of the subtle impressions of their beginningless Karma. What then follows from this? It is this: Even though one is qualified for Jnana Yoga because of the complete knowledge of the self, one should do work, holding the view as said previously, that Karma Yoga by itself without Jnana Yoga is an independent means for the vision of the self. He should thus generate love for all types of activity among those who do not know the complete truth. Sri Krsna declares (in the verses 27 to 30) the way in which the self is to be contemplated on as not being an agent as required by Karma Yoga, after demonstrating the difference between the enlightened and unenlightened among those practising Karma Yoga.

3.27 It is the Gunas of Prakrti like Sattva, Rajas etc., that perform all the activities appropriate to them. ut the man, whose nature is deluded by his Ahankara, thinks, ' I am the doer of all these actions.' Ahankara is the mistaken conception of ' I' applied to the workings of Prakrti which is not the ' I' . The meaning is that it is because of this (Ahankara), that one who is ignorant of the real nature of the self, thinks, ' I am the doer' with regard to the activities that are really being done by the Gunas of Prakrti.

3.28 ut he who knows the truth about the divisions of the Gunas and their actions --- namely, about the division among Sattva etc., on the one hand, and the divisions among their respective functionings on the other hand --- it is he who, realising that Gunas, i.e., Sattva etc., are operating on their own products, is not attached to the actions of the Gunas, being convinced, ' I am not the doer.'

3.29 Those who ' do not know the whole truth' are those persons who are trying for the vision of the self but are deluded about the nature of the self, not knowing, on account of their involvement in Prakrti, that actions proceed from the Gunas of Prakrti. They are therefore attached to the actions of the Gunas --- i.e., only to actions forming part of Karma Yoga. They are qualified only for Karma Yoga. One who knows the complete truth should not, by himself remaining a practitioner of Jnana Yoga, unsettle those persons who are ignorant and who do not know the complete truth. Those, the ignorant, who tend to follow the behaviour of a great man, when they see him transcend Karma Yoga, will have their minds shaken from Karma Yoga. Thus, the great man, should himself remain established in Karma Yoga, while having the full knowledge of the true nature of the self and contemplating on the self as not being the agent. Thus he should demonstrate that Karma Yoga by itself is an autonomous means for the vision of the self. He should create in those who do not know the complete truth the love of Karma Yoga. The superiority of this Karma Yoga over Jnana Yoga even for those who are qualified for Jnana Yoga has already been stated. Therefore one who is a respected person of note should follow this Karma Yoga alone for the good of the world. The method of performing actions after attributing agency to the Gunas by discerning the nature of the self as different from Prakrti, has been taught. The agency of the self is not produced by the inherent nature of the self, but by its contact with the Gunas. Hence by discriminating between what is obtained by contact and not obtained when there is no contact, it has to be understood that this agency is due to the Gunas or Prakrti. Now it is said that the agency of works, first attributed to Gunas, ultimately go to the Supreme Person who is the Self of all. It is done by discerning that the nature of the individual self is one of subservience to the Supreme Person, as they constitute His body:

3.30 Do all prescribed acts such as war etc., (here a duty) free from desire or selfishness and devoid of fear, with a mind focussed on the self. Surrender all acts to Me, the Lord of all, who constitutes the inner pervading Self of all beings. ' Adhyatma-cetas' is that mind which is focussed on the self by knowledge of the essential nature of the self as declared in hundreds of Vedic texts. That this individual self constitutes the body of the Supreme Self and is

actuated by Him, is taught by Sruti texts like: ' He who has entered within, is the ruler of all beings and is the Self of all' (Tai. Ar., 3.11), ' Him who has entered inside and is the doer' (Ibid., 3.23), ' He who, dwelling in the self, is within the self, whom the Self does not know, whose body is the self, who controls the self from within --- He is your internal ruler and Immortal Self' (r. U., 3.7.22). Smrti texts also speak in the same manner: ' Him who is the ruler of all' (Manu, 12.122). Sri Krsna will say later on: ' And I am seated in the hearts of all; from Me are memory, knowledge and the faculty of reason' (15.15); ' The Lord, O Arjuna, lives in the heart of everything causing them to spin round and round by His power, as if set on a wheel' (18.61). Hence, dedicate to Me, the Supreme Person, all actions considering them as done by Me, by contemplating on the self as actuated by Me by reason of Its constituting My body. And do every thing, considering the actions as My worship only; becoming free from desire for fruits and therefore free from selfishness as regards actions, engage in acts like war etc., devoid of ' fever' , i.e., the excitement caused by passions like anger. Contemplate that the Supreme Person, Lord of all, Principal of all, gets done His own works only for the purpose of getting Himself worshipped with His own instruments, namely, the individual selves which belong to Him and are His agents. ecome free from selfish attachment to action. Also be free from the feverish concern originating from such thoughts as ' What will become of me with an ancient, endless accumulation of evil arising from beginningless time?' Perform Karma Yoga with ease, for the Supreme Person Himself, worshipped by acts, will free you from bondage. His Lordship and Principalship over all are settled by Sruti texts like: ' Him who is the supreme and great Lord of lords, Him the Supreme Divinity of divinities' (Sve. U., 6.7), ' The Lord of the Universe' (Tai. Na., 11.3), ' The Supreme Ruler of rulers' (Sve. U., 6.6-7). Isvaratva is the same as Sesitva, which means controllership. Sri Krsna declares that this alone is the essential meaning of the Upanisads:

3.31 There are those persons who are qualified to understand the Sastras and decide for themselves what is My doctrine, and follow them accordingly; there are others who are full of faith in the meaning of the Sastras without however practising it. And there are still others who, even though devoid of faith, do not

cavil at it, saying that the true meaning of the Sastras cannot be this, i.e., they do not find any blemish pertaining to the Sastras which possess great qualities. All these persons are freed from Karmas which are there from beginningless time and which cause bondage. y the term, api (even) in ' te pi karmabhih' (' even they from Karmas'), these men are divided into three groups. The meaning is that those who, even if they do not act upon the meaning but still believe in this meaning of the Sastras and do not cavil at it, will be cleansed of their evil by their faith and freedom from fault-finding. For, if they have faith they will, before long, take to the practice of this very meaning of the Sastras and be freed. Sri Krsna now speaks of the evil that will befall those who do not practice this instruction of the Upanisads, i.e., those who are faithless and who cavil at it.

3.32 ut those who do not follow this view of Mine, namely, that the self has Me for Its support, is subservient to Me and is actuated by Me only, i.e., those who do not perform all acts contemplating in this way as also those who have no faith in the meaning of the Sastras and calumniate them --- know them to be extremely deluded and devoid of reasoning and knowledge and consequently completely lost. For, the function of the mind is the determination of the real nature of things, and in its absence, those mentioned above are devoid of reason, and therefore apostates in knowledge and extremely deluded in all ways. For one united with the Prakrti (body), the sense of agency results from the preponderance of the Gunas of Prakrti. ut this agency really rests with the Supreme Person. Contemplating thus, Karma Yoga alone should be practised by both --- those who are competent for Karma Yoga only and those who are competent for Jnana Yoga. The implied superiority of Karma Yoga has the following justifications; it is easy to perform, free from liability to lapse, and independent of anything else; it comprises the knowledge of the self also within its scope. On the other hand Jnana Yoga is difficult to practise, is not free from the liability to lapse, leaves one dependent on actions for the sustenance of the body etc. And for a distinguished perosn, this (i.e., Karma Yoga) is especially what ought to be practised. Next, till the end of this chapter, it is explained how Jnana Yoga, being difficult, is liable to lead to lapses.

3.33 Such and such is the nature of the self, which is different from the Prakrti --- this has to be always contemplated upon: thus declare the Sastras. Even a person who knows this, acts in relation to material objects only according to his own nature, i.e., guided by his old subtle impressions. How is this? ' All beings follow their nature.' eings in conjunction with non-conscient matter, all follow only subtle impressions which have continued to come from time immemorial. What can the control enjoined by Sastras, do to these beings who follow their subtle impressions? Sri Krsna expounds the way by which individuals are overpowered to follow their respective natures:

3.34 An unavoidable attraction has been fixed for organs of sense like ear towards the objects like sound, and for organs of action like that of tongue towards their objects like tasty food. This longing is in the form of desire to experience these objects, which is caused by old subtle impressions. When their experience is thwarted, an unavoidable aversion is experienced. Thus, these two, attachment and aversion, bring under their control one who aspires to follow Jnana Yoga, and forcibly engage him in actions appropriate to them, in spite of his having established some sort of control over the senses. Such an aspirant fails to get the experience of the self, and therefore becomes completely lost. So no one practising Jnana Yoga should come under the sway of attachment and aversion, which are ruinous. These two, attachment and aversion, are indeed his unconquerable foes that deter him from the practice of Jnana Yoga.

3.35 Therefore Karma Yoga is better than Jnana Yoga. For, it forms one' s own duty, since it is natural to one and easy to perform, and though defective, is free from liability to interruption and fall. Jnana Yoga, on the other hand, though performed well for some time, constitutes the duty of another, as it is difficult to practise for one conjoined with Prakrti. It is therefore liable to interruption. For a person who lives practising Karma Yoga --- which is his duty because he is qualified for it --- even death without success in one birth does not matter. For, in the next birth with the help of the experience already gained in the previous birth, it will be possible for him to perform Karma Yoga without

any impediments. Jnana Yoga is fraught with fear because of the possibility of errors for anyone who is conjoined to Prakrti. It is another' s duty, on account of it being not easily adoptable by him.

3.36 Arjuna said -- Impelled by what does a man practising Jnana Yoga commit sin in the form of experiencing the objects of the senses, as if constrained by force, even against his own will not to experience the objects of the senses.

3.37 The Lord said -- The highly ravenous desire is born of the Guna Rajas originating from old subtle impressions. It has for its objects sound and other sense contacts. It is a foe to him who is practising Jnana Yoga, as he is joined with Prakrti constituted of the Gunas which rise and subside periodically. It attracts him towards the objects of the senses. It is this desire alone which, when hampered, develops into anger towards those persons who are the cause of such hindrance. It is a powerful cause of sin. It incites the aspirant to do harm to others. Know this, which is born of the Guna called Rajas, as the natural enemy of Jnana Yogins.

3.38 As a fire is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by dust and as an embryo by the membrance, so are the embodied beings covered by this desire. Sri Krsna teaches the mode of this envelopement:

3.39 The knowledge, having the self for its subject, of this embodied person (the Jiva) whose nature is knowledge, is enveloped by this constant enemy in the shape of desire, which brings about attachment for sense-objects. This desire is difficult to satisfy, i.e., has for its object things unworthy of attainment and is insatiable, i.e., never attains satisfaction. Now listen to what constitutes the instruments with which desire subdues the self. Sri Krsna goes on to expound this:

3.40 The senses, the mind and the intellect are the instruments of desire in so far as it overpowers the self through them. y means of these, viz., the senses, the mind and the intellect, which have been reduced to the position of servants

through attachment to sense objects, desire deludes the embodied soul caught up in Prakrti by covering up Its knowledge. Here ' deluding' means making the self a victim of manifold illusions, by turning It away from the knowledge of Its true nature, and making It indulge in sensuous experiences.

3.41 For whatever reason a person engaged in Jnana Yoga, which is of the nature of abandoning the activities of all the senses, should control this enemy in the shape of desire which turns him away from the self through creating infatuation for objects of the senses --- for the same reason, you, who are yoked to the activities of the senses by reason of being in conjunction with the Prakrti, should, in the beginning itself, i.e., at the very beginning of the practice of the means for release, control the senses by the practice of Karma Yoga, which provides for the regulation of the working of the senses. And then you must destroy, i.e., slay this sinful enemy, which is in the shape of desire and which destroys knowledge and discrimination, i.e., knowledge relating to the nature of the self and of the discriminative power, which is the means to gain this knowledge. Sri Krsna speaks of that which is most important among the adversaries:

3.42 The senses are called the important obstacles of knowledge, because when the senses keep operating on their objects, the knowledge of the self cannot arise. ' The mind is higher than the senses' : even if the senses are withdrawn, if the Manas (mind) ruminates over sense objects, knowledge of the self cannot be had. ' The intellect (uddhi) is greater than the mind' , i.e., even if the mind is indifferent to sense objects, a perverted decision by the intellect can obstruct the dawn of the knowledge of the self. ut even if all of them upto the intellect are quietened from their activity, still when desire, identified with will, originating from Rajas, is operating, it by itself obstructs the knowledge of the self by inducing the senses etc., to operate in their fields. Thus it is said here: ' ut what is greater than intellect is that.' What is greater than the intellect --- is desire. Such is the sense of the last sentence here.

3.43 Thus, understanding desire, which is higher than even the intellect, to be the fore antagonistic to Jnana Yoga, and establishing the mind by means of

the intellect in Karma Yoga, slay, i.e., destroy this foe, in the shape of desire which is difficult to overcome.

BHAGAVADGITA

English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda

Chapter 4

4.1 - 4.2 The Lord said -- This Karma Yoga declared to you should not be considered as having been taught now merely, for creating encouragement in you for war. I Myself had taught this Yoga to Vivasvan at the commencement of Manu' s age as a means for all beings to attain release, which is man' s supreme end. Vivasvan taught it to Manu, and Manu to Iksvaku. The royal sages of old knew this Yoga transmitted by tradition. ecause of long lapse of time and because of the dullness of the intellect of those who heard it, it has been almost lost.

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4.3 It is the same ancient, unchanged Yoga which is now taught to you, who out of friendship and overwhelming devotion have resorted to Me whole-heartedly. The meaning is that it has been taught to you fully with all its accessories. ecause it is the most mysterious knowledge declared in the Vedanta, it cannot be known or taught by anyone other than Myself. In this connection, in order to know the truth about the Lord' s descent correctly, Arjuna asked:

4.4 Arjuna said -- According to the calculation of time, your birth was indeed later, contemporaneous with our births. And the birth of Vivasvan was at an earlier time, reckoned as twenty-eight cycles of units of four Yugas each. How can I understand as true that you taught it in the beginning? Now, there is no

contradiction here, for it was quite possible that He had taught Vivasvan in a former birth. The memory of what was done in former births is quite natural for great men. This should not be taken to mean that Arjuna does not know the son of Vasudeva, the speaker, as the Lord of all. ecause he (Arjuna) says later on: ' You are the Supreme rahman, the Supreme Light and the Supreme Purifier. All the seers proclaim You as the eternal Divine Purusa, the Primal Lord, unborn and all-pervading. So also proclaim the divine sage Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyasa. You Yourself also are saying this to me' (10.12-13.) Arjuna had heard repeatedly from hisma and others during the Rajasuya sacrifice of Yudhisthira, ' Krsna alone is the cause of creation and submergence of all the worlds. This universe, consisting of things both animate and inanimate, was created for the sake of Krsna' (Ma. ha., 2.38.23) ' The entire universe is subservient to Krsna' is the meaning of ' For the sake of Krnsa' . This apparent contradiction may be explained as follows: Arjuna surely knows the son of Vasudeva as the hagavan. Though knowing Him as such, he questions as if he did not know Him. This is his intention. Can the birth of the Lord of all, who is antagonistic to all that is evil and wholly auspicious, omniscient, whose will is always true and whose desires are fulfilled --- can the birth of such a Person be of the same nature as that of the gods, men etc., who are subject to Karma? Or can it be false like the illusions of a magical show? Or could it be real? In other words, is the birth of the Supreme eing as the incarnate a real fact or a mere illusory phenomenon produced by a magician' s art? If His birth is real, what is the mode of His birth? What is the nature of His body? What is the manner of His birth? What is the nature of this body of His? What is the casue of His birth? To what end is He born? The way in which Sri Krsna answers Arjuna' s question, justifies the construing of his question in this way.

4.5 The Lord said -- y this, the reality of the Lord' s birth is declared in the sentence, ' Many births of Mine have passed.' ' So is it with you' is added by way of illustration. The mode of incarnation, the reality of His body and the cause of His birth are explained in the following verse.

4.6 Without forsaking any of the My special qualities, as supreme rulership, birthless, imperishability etc., I am born by My free will. Prakrti means one' s own nature. The meaning is that by employment of My own Nature and taking a form of My choice, I incarnate by My own will (Maya). The character of My own Nature becomes evident from the following Srutis: ' Him who is of sun-like colour, beyond darkness (Tamas)' (Sve. U., 3.8), ' Him who abides beyond Rajas (active matter)' (Sama 17.1.4.2); ' This Golden Person who is within the sun' (Cha. U. 1.6.6); ' Within the heart, there is the Person consisting of mind, immortal and golden' (Tai. U. 1.6.1); ' All mortal creatures have come from the self-luminous Person' (Yaj., 32.2); ' Whose form is light, whose will is truth, who is the self of ethereal space, who contains all actions, contains all desires, contains all odours, contains all tastes' (Cha. U., 3.14.2); ' Like a raiment of golden colour' (r. U., 4.3.6). ' Atma-mayaya' means through the Maya which belongs to Myself. Here the term Maya is identical with knowledge as stated in the lexicon of Yaska: ' Maya is wisdom, knowledge.' Further there is the usage of competent people: ' y Maya, He knows the good and bad of his creatures.' Hence by My own knowledge means ' by My will.' Hence, without abandoning My essential attributes which belong to Me the Lord of all, such as being free of sins, having auspicious attributes etc., and creating My own form similar to the configuration of gods, men etc., I incarnate in the form of gods etc. The Sruti teaches the same thing: ' eing unborn, He is born in various forms' (Tai. A., 3.12.7). The purport is that His birth is quite unlike that of ordinary beings. The dissimilarity consists in that He is born out of His own will unlike ordinary beings whose birth is necessitated by their Karma. Thus constured, there is no contradiction also between what was taught earlier and what is taught later as in the statements: ' Many births of Mine have passed, O Arjuna, and similarly yours also. I know them all' (4.5); ' I incarnate Myself' (4.7); and ' He who thus knows in truth My birth and work' (4.9). [All this elaboration is meant to refute the doctrine of mere apparency of incarnations as taught by the Advaitins. Ramanuja, as stated in his Introduction to the hasya, upholds the absolute reality of incarnations.] Sri Krsna now specifies the times of His incarnations.

4.7 There is no restriction as to the time of My birth; whenever the Dharma taught by the Vedas that must be observed according to the arrangements of the four stations and the four stages of life declines, and Adharma, its opposite, increases, then I Myself, by My own will and in the manner stated, incarnate Myself. Sri Krsna gives the purpose of His birth.

4.8 The good are those who follow the Dharma, as defined above. They are the foremost among the Vaisnavas, who have taken refuge in Me. While My name, acts and form are inaccessible to speech and thought, these devotees cannot get support, sustenance etc., for themselves without perceiving Me. They regard even a moment' s time without Me as a thousand Kalpas. They become broken in every limb because of the separation from Me. So I am born from age to age in the forms of gods, men etc., for protecting them by affording them the opportunity to behold My form and acts and to converse with Me. I am born also for the destruction of those who are opposed to such devotees and for the restoration of declining Vedic Dharma, which consists of My worship. The main purpose of incarnation is the revealing of His adorable form, so that all may worship Him. The destruction of the wicked is secondary only. There is no specific restrictions of the Yugas like Krta, Treta etc., for the appearance of Divine Incarnations.

4.9 He who knows truly My life and actions, super-natural and special to Me, which are intended solely for the protection of the good and to enable them to take refuge in Me, --- Me who am devoid of birth, unlike ordinary beings whose birth is caused by Karma associated with Prakrti and its three Gunas producing the evil of bondage, and who is endowed with auspicious attributes such as Lordship over all, omniscience, infallible will etc., --- such a person after abandoning the present body will never be born, but will reach Me only. y true knowledge of My divine birth and acts, all his sins that stand in his way of taking refuge in Me are destroyed. In this birth itself, resorting to Me in the manner already described, and loving Me and concentrating on Me alone, he reaches Me. Sri Krsna speaks of the same thing:

4.10 Purified by the austerity called knowledge of the truth of My life and deeds, many have become transformed in this manner. The Sruti says to the same effect: ' The wise know well the manner in which He is born' (Tai. A., 3.13.1). ' Dhiras' means the foremost among the wise. The meaning is the wise know the manner of His birth thus. It is not that I protect only those who resort to Me in incarnations in the shapes of gods, men etc.

4.11 Whoever desirous of resorting to Me, in whatever manner they think of Me according to their inclinations and take refuge in Me, i.e., resort to Me --- I favour them in the same manner as desired by them; I reveal Myself to them. Why say much here! All men who are intent on following Me do experience, with their own eyes and other organs of sense in all ways, i.e., in every way wished by them, My form (including images), however inaccessible it might be to speech and thought of the Yogins. Now, after completing the incidental topic (with regard to divine incarnations), in order to teach the mode in which Karma Yoga itself acquires the form of Jnana, He begins to speak of the difficulty in finding persons who are qualified for Karma Yoga of this kind.

4.12 All men, desirous of the fruits of their actions, ' sacrifice' , i.e., worship or propitiate Indra and other divinities only. ut nobody worships Me abandoning attachment to fruits --- Me, who am the Self of Indra and other divinities and the real enjoyer of all sacrifices. Why is this so? ecause in this world of men, fruits in the form of sons, cattle, food etc., follow soon from their performance of such sacrificial rites. The phrase, ' the world of men' implies heaven etc., also. ecause the unending accumulation of evil heaped up from beginningless time has not been exhausted, all those worldly people lack discernment. Therefore they want rapid results and perform those rituals which consist of the worship of Indra and other divinities for the sake of sons, cattle, food etc., and for the sake of heaven etc. ut none with his mind anguished by Samsara and aspiring for final release, practises Karma Yoga of the kind described above. Real Karma Yoga is My worship. Sri Krsna now speaks of the cause which annuls the evil obstructing the starting of Karma Yoga.

4.13 The whole universe beginning with rahma and ending with a cluster of grass, with the system of four stations divided according to Sattva and other Gunas and by actions like self-control corresponding to the Gunas, was created by Me. The mention of ' creation' is for illustration. The universe is protected by Me alone and is withdrawn by Me alone. Know Me to be the creator of his manifold actions of creation etc., but at the same time to be non-agent. Sri Krsna explains here how this is possible.

4.14 These actions of varied nature like creation etc., do not contaminate Me i.e., do not bind Me. For the distinctions of gods, men etc., are not brought about by Me, but by the particular Karmas, good and evil, of created beings. Therefore by the process of discriminating between the acquired and the inherent, it will be found that I am not the author of this varied creations etc. The created or embodied selves, who are endowed with bodies and organs at the time of creation in accordance with their own Karmas springing from attachment to fruits etc., experience all enjoyments available in creation. Thus for them (embodied selves) alone there is desire for the results of creation etc., and for the results of their Karmas. There is no desire in Me for it. The Sutrakara says to the same effect: ' No partiality or cruelty on account of there being dependence (on the Karma of souls for inequalities' (r. S., 2.1.34). hagavan Parasara also says so: ' He (the Lord) is only the operative cause in the creation of beings. That from which the creative forces spring constitutes the material cause. Leaving aside the material cause, the being that becomes embodied does not require the help of any other thing whatever. A thing is led into the condition in which it is, O best of ascetics, only by its own potentiality' (V. P., 1.4.51-2). The Supreme Person is only the operative cause with regard to the creation of those to be created, i.e., the selves in the bodies of gods etc. The material cause for the differences into gods etc., is the potentiality in the form of previous Karmas of the selves to be created. Therefore, leaving aside the operative cause, i.e., the Supreme Person, the creator, the embodied beings do not require anything else for causing difference into conditions of gods etc. For these selves are led to take the forms of gods etc., by the potentiality of their own old Karma with which they are connected. Such is the meaning. He who knows Me thus to be the agent of creation etc., and still a

non-agent, i.e., as one who has no desire for the results of the acts of creation etc., --- such a person is not tied by previous actions, i.e., he is freed from the old Karmas which obstruct the undertaking of Karma Yoga by causing attachment to results. Such is the purport.

4.15 Actions of the kind described above were performed even by the aspirants of old for liberation, who have become free from evil after knowing Me in this way. Therefore, after having got rid of the sins by knowledge of Me in the aforesaid way, perform actions in the same way as they were performed by those ancients like Vivasvan, Manu etc., in olden times, in the way in which their performance was taught by Me even then. I shall declare it again in what follows. Sri Krsna stresses the difficulty of undertaking the type of Karma that is going to be taught now.

4.16 What is the form of the action which should be done by an aspirant for liberation? And what is non-action? Knowledge about the true nature of the acting self, is spoken of as non-action. The wise, even the learned scholars, are puzzled, i.e., do not truly know, both these --- the proper form of the actions to be performed and the proper form of knowledge included in it. I shall teach you that action which includes knowledge within itself. Knowing, i.e., following it, you will be released from evil, i.e., from the bondage of Samsara. Knowledge about the work to be performed results in its performance. Why is it so difficult to know this Karma? Sri Krsna replies:

4.17 There is something which ought to be known in regard to action (Karma) which forms the means of attaining release. So also is the case in regard to ' multi-form or varied forms of action' (Vikarma). These are what have acquired variegation as obligatory, occasional and desire-prompted works requiring numerous requisites. There is also something to be known about non-action, i.e., knowledge of the self. Therefore, deep, i.e., difficult to understand, is the way of action to be pursued by the seeker after release. What should be known as regards multi-form or variegated forms of Karma is that the attribution of differences leading to differences of fruits in obligatory, occasional and desire-prompted rites and acquisition of things required for

their performace, etc., must be renounced, realising that the Sastras aim at only one result, i.e., release (and not several results said to accrue from these works). This has been declared in connection with the teaching, ' The resolute mind is one-pointed' (2.41) and is not elaborated here. Sri Krsna explains what must be known in regard to action and non-action.

4.18 Here by the term ' non-action' , the knowledge of the self, which is distinct from action and which forms the subject under consideration, is meant. ' He who sees non-action in action and also action in non-action,' denotes him who can perceive knowledge of the self even while action is being performed and who can also perceive action while engaged in non-action, i.e., knowledge of the self. What is the import of this saying? What is taught here is this: One can perceive, by constant contemplation on the truth about the self, that the action that is being performed in itself is a form of knowledge. One can also perceive that this knowledge is also of the form of Karma because of its being contained in Karma Yoga. oth these (i.e., action in the form of knowledge and knowledge in the form of actions) are accomplished by contemplation on the true nature of the self, even while work is being performed. Thus, he who can see actions as included in contemplation on the reality of the self, is wise, i.e., he knows the full meaning of the Sastras; he is fit among men, i.e., fit to attain release. He alone has fulfilled all actions, i.e., carried out the entire purpose of the Sastras. [The purport is that no contradiction between knowledge and action is felt by one who knows the philosophy of the self]. How is the form of knowledge accomplished through works which are obviously activities that are being performed? Sri Krsna explains:

4.19 In the case of an aspirant for release, all undertakings of actions in the form of obligatory, occasional and desiderative acts accomplished through the acquisition of materials for their performance as also other works, are free from desire, i.e., are devoid of attachment to fruits. They are devoid of delusive identification. If the mind identifies the self with Prakrti and its Gunas, it is Sankalpa, i.e., ' delusive identification.' Genuine Karma Yoga is free from such identification. Such identification is overcome through contemplation on the real nature of the self as different from Prakrti. Those who know the truth call

him a sage, who acts in this way and whose previous Karmas are thereby burnt up by the fire of knowledge of the real nature of the self generated along with his actions. He is a true Karma Yogin. Thus that knowledge is involved in true Karma Yoga, is established. Sri Krsna elaborates this point again:

4.20 Whoever performs actions, renouncing attachment to their fruits and is satisfied with the eternal, i.e., satisfied with his own self, and dependent on none, i.e., devoid of dependence on transient Prakrti (body and external nature) --- such a perosn, even though fully engaged in actions, does not act at all. He is engaged in the practice of knowledge under the form of action. Again, Karma, having the form of knowledge, is examined:

4.21 ' Free from desire' means having no attachment to the fruits of actions. ' His intellect and mind controlled' means one whose intellect and mind are under control. ' Giving up all possessions' means one who, on account of his having the self as his primary objective, is devoid of the sense of ownership in relation to Prakrti and its derivatives. One who is thus engaged in bodily work alone as long as he lives, does not incur any sin, i.e., does not get engrossed in Samsara. He gets the vision of the self by Karma Yoga of this kind itself, and need not resort to any exlusive practice of Jnana Yoga in between liberation and the practice of Karma Yoga of the alone description.

4.22 Content with whatever chance may bring for the maintenance of the body; ' rising above the pairs of opposites' means enduring cold, heat and such other experiences until one has completed the practice of Karma Yoga; ' free from ill-will?' i.e., free from ill-will towards others, seeing his own Karma as the cause of his adversity; ' even-minded in success and failure,' i.e., even-minded at success like victory in war, etc., and failure therein --- such a person ' is not bound,' i.e., he does not fall into Samsara, though devoted to action without any exclusive practice of Jnana Yoga.

4.23 Of a person whose attachment to all objects is gone because of his mind being established in the knowledge of the self, who is therefore liberated from accepting all worldly possessions and who is engaged in the performance of

sacrifices etc., as described above --- in the case of such a person his beginningless load of Karma, which is the cause of his bondgae, is completely dissolved, i.e., destroyed without leaving any residue. So far the nature of Karma as having the form of knowledge has been described as emerging from constant contemplation on the nature of the self as different from Prakrti. And now Sri Krsna says that all actions together with their ancillaries, have the form of knowledge because of constant contemplation by the aspirant on the Supreme Person who is the Supreme rahman, as being his soul.

4.24 The expression ' rahman is the instrument to offer with' (It is to be remembered that in Ramanuja' s system ' rahman' in the primary sense is the ' Whole' with the Supreme eing as the Soul and Atmans and Matter (Prakrti) as His body in inseparable union with the Whole. So the word ' rahman' can, according to the needs of each context, be used to indicate the Supreme eing, the Atman, or Prakrti; In verse 24 it has been used in all these senses. We have therefore put it in italics. See Introduction.) is adjectival to ' the oblation' . That by which an offering is given, such as a ladle, is an Arpana. It is called rahman because it is an effect of rahman, rahman being the material cause of the universe. ' rahmaarpanam' is the oblation, of which the instrument is rahman. The oblation, just like the instrument with which it is offered, is also rahman. It is offered by the agent rahman into the fire of rahman. He is the rahma-karma-samadhi who contemplates thus on all acts as filled with the Supreme rahman or as having the Supreme rahman as the Self. He who contemplates on rahman as the Soul of all actions, reaches rahman alone, as his own self has the Supreme rahman as Its Self. The meaning is that the individual self --- which is rahman because of Its having rahman as Its Self --- has to realise Its own real nature. All actions performed by an aspirant for release have the form of knowledge because of their association with the contemplation of the Supreme rahman as their self. They are a direct means for the vision of the self without the meditation of Jnana Yoga. Thus, Sri Krsna, after explaining how Karma takes the form of knowledge, now speaks of the various kinds of Karma Yoga.

4.25 Some Karma Yogins resort to the sacrifice relating to gods, i.e., the sacrifice which takes the form of worshipping gods. The meaning is that they have steadfast devotion only in this. ' Others offer sacrifice into the fire of rahman solely by means of sacrifice.' Here the term, ' sacrifice' is used in the sense of the oblation, the ladle etc., required for performing a sacrifice and therefore they are said to constitute ' sacrificing.' These are of the nature of rahman. ' Offer by means of sacrifice' indicates the ladle and other implements for the accomplishment of sacrifice.

4.26 Others endeavour towards the restraint of the senses like ear and the rest, i.e., keep themselves away from the objects pleasing to the senses. Other Yogins endeavour to prevent the attachment of the senses to sound and other objects of the senses, i.e., they abstain from the sense objects even when they are allowed to be near, by the discriminative process of belittling their valure and enjoyable nature.

4.27 Some again offer as oblations all the functions of the senses, the activities of the vital breath etc., into the fire of Yoga of restraint of the mind kindled by knowledge. They endeavour to prevent the mind from getting attached to the functions of the senses and vital breaths. That is, by contemplating on the self they sublimate these energies and overcome even the lurking subtle desires for them.

4.28 Some Karma Yogins perform the sacrifice of material objects. Some worship the gods with materials honestly acquired. Some practise charity, some engage themselves in sacrifices and in making oblations into the sacred fire. All these perform sacrifice with material objects. Some do the sacrifice of austerity by devoting themselves to Krcchra, Candrayana, fast, etc. Others perform the sacrifice of Yoga. Some devote themselves to making pilgrimages to sacred sanctuaries and holy places. Here the term Yoga means pilgrimages to sacred sancturaries and holy places as the context relates to aspects of Karma Yoga. Some are devoted to recitation of Vedic texts and some to learning their meaning. They are all devoted to the practice of self-control and of strict vows, i.e., they are men to steady resolution.

4.29 - 4.30 Other Karma Yogins are devoted to the practice of breath control. They are of three types because of the differences in inhalation, exhalation and stoppage of breath. Puraka (inhalation) is that in which the inward breath is sacrificed in the outward breath. Recaka (exhalation) is that when the outward breath is sacrificed in the inward breath. Kumbhaka (stoppage of breath) is that when the flow of both inward and outward breaths is stopped. The clause, restricting of diet, applies to all the three types of persons devoted to the control of breath. All these, according to their liking and capacity are engaged in performing the various kinds of Karma Yoga beginning from the sacrifice of material objects to the control of breath. They know and are devoted to sacrifices comprising obligatory and occasional rituals preceded by the performance of ' the great sacrifices' (Panca-Maha-Yajna), as alluded to in ' Creating men along with the sacrifices' (3.10). ecause of this only, their sins are done away with. Those who are engaged in Karma Yoga by sustaining their bodies only by the ambrosia of sacrificial remains will go to the eternal rahman. ' Go to rahman' here means realise the self which has rahman for Its soul.

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4.31 He ' who offers no sacrifices,' i.e., he who does not devote himself to obligatory and occasional actions, preceded by the performance of the ' great sacrifices' etc., will not be able to achieve human ends which are associated with the material world and are called by the names of virtue, wealth and worldly satisfactions. How then can the man' s supreme end called release (Moksa), which is other than these, be attained? As Moksa, man' s supreme end, has been mentioned, other objectives different from it, are named ' this world.' That is, indeed, the material world. [Perhaps the idea is that all types of sacrificers should perform the Panca-Maha-Yajnas, and take the remnants of it as their daily food. Only in this way can we give some meaning to ' ambrosial food' connected with the performance of all the various kinds of sacrifice mentioned in the above verses.]

4.32 Thus there are many kinds of Kamra Yoga, which are spread out for the attainment of the rahman. That means, they lead to the realisaion of the true nature of the individual self. Know that all these are forms of Karma Yoga, which have been previoulsy defined and diversified, as born of actions. That means, know them as resulting from occasional and obligatory rites performed day by day. Knowing thus, observing them in the manner prescribed, you will be released. It has been stated that actions have the form of knowledge because of the inclusion of knowledge in them. Now Sri Krsna explains the predominance of the component of knowledge in such actions which include knowledge within themselves.

4.33 Karma Yoga has two aspects --- knowledge and material ingredients. Of these two, the component of knowledge is superior to the component of material ingredients. Knowledge is the culmination of all actions and of everything else, accessories and other things helpful. This knowledge alone, which is to be obtained by all means, is practised as comprehended in Karma Yoga. And this knowledge being regularly practised, reaches gradually what is ultimately attainable i.e., the vision of the self.

4.34 This is the knowledge concerning the self that has been taught by Me in the verses beginning with ' Know that to be indestructibe' (2.17) and ending with ' this has been given to you' (2.39). So engaged in appropriate actions, you can learn, according to the maturity of your competence, this wisdom from the wise, who will explain it to you, if you attend on them through prostrating and questioning and by serving them. The wise are those who have immediate apprehension (or vision) of the true nature of the self. Having been honoured by you through prostration etc., and observing your mental disposition characterised by desire for knowledge which you have evinced by your questions, they will teach you this knowledge. Sri Krsna now speaks of the characterisitcs of knowledge concerning the nature of the self, in the form of direct perception.

4.35 Having which knowledge, you will not again fall into this delusion of mistaking the body etc., for the self, which is the cause of possessiveness etc. y this (knowledge) you will see in yourself all the beings which appear in diversity of forms such as gods, men etc.; for between you and other beings there is equality of nature when freed from the hold of Prakrti, as your self and all other selves have the form of knowledge as fas as their essence is concerned. Sri Krsna will later on instruct that the nature of the self, dissociated from the evil of contact with Prakrti, is equal in all beings. ' For faultless rahman (individual self) is alike everywhere; therefore, abide in rahman' (5.19). And then you will see all beings without any exception in Me, because of the similarity of nature of the pure selves with one another and with My nature. For Sri Krsna will teach later on: ' Resorting to this knowledge and partaking of My nature' (14.5). So the euality of the selves, devoid of name and form, with the nature of the Supreme, is known from the texts like: ' Then the wise, shaking off good and evil, stainless, attain supreme equality' (Mun. U., 3.1.3). Therefore all selves dissociated from Prakrti are equal in nature to one another and equal in nature to the Lord of all. [The idea is that blissfulness is the basic nature of all selves. lissfulness (Ananda) is the nature of the Supreme eing also. Equality contemplated is in this respect only, but not in power of creation, which belongs only to Isvara]

4.36 Even though you be the most sinful of all sinners, you will completely cross over the sea of sins previoulsy accumulated, with the boat of knowledge concerning the self.

4.37 The fire of knowledge concerning the real nature of the self reduces to ashes the collection of endless Karmas accumulated from beginningless times, just as a well-kindled fire reduces to ashes a bundle of firewood.

4.38 Nothing here in this world purifies like this knowledge; for the knowledge of the self destroys all evil. He who has reached perfection by practising Karma Yoga in its form of knowledge daily in the manner taught, in due time, of his own accord, attaints it, i.e., knowledge concerning his own self. Sri Krsna expounds the same lucidly thus:

4.39 After attaining knowledge through instruction in the manner described, he must have firm faith in it and the possibility of its development into ripe knowledge. He must be intent on it, i.e., his mind must be focussed thereupon. He must control his senses and keep them away from all their objects. Soon will he then reach the aforesaid state of maturity and obtain knowledge. Soon after attaining such kind of knowledge, he will reach supreme peace, i.e., he attains the supreme Nirvana (realisation of the self).

4.40 ' The ignorant,' i.e., one devoid of knowledge received through instruction, ' the faithless' or one who has no faith in developing this knowledge taught to him, i.e., who does not strive to progress quickly, and ' the doubting one,' i.e., one who is full of doubts in regard to the knowledge taught --- such persons perish, are lost. When this knowledge taught to him about the real nature of the self is doubted, then he loses this material world as also the next world. The meaning is that the ends of man, such as Dharma, Artha and Karma which constitute the material ends or fulfilments, are not achieved by such a doubting one. How then can man' s supreme end, release be achieved by such a doubting one? For all the ends of human life can be achieved through the actions which are prescribed by the Sastras, but their performance requires

the firm conviction that the self is different from the body. Therefore, even a little happiness does not come to the person who has a doubting mind concerning the self.

4.41 The countless ancient Karmas which constitute the cause of bondage, do not bind him who has renounced actions through Karma Yoga in the manner explained before, who has sundered all doubts concerning the self by the knowledge of the self in the manner explained before, and who is of steady mind, i.e., unshakable, with the mind focussed steadily on the meaning that has been forth.

4.42 Therefore, after sundering this doubt concerning the self, born of beginningless ignorance and present in the heart, by the sword of the knowledge of the self in the manner explained before, practise the Karma Yoga taught by Me. For that, rise up, O Arjuna.

BHAGAVADGITA

English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda

Chapter 5

5.1 Arjuna said -- ' You praise the renunciation of actions, i.e., Jnana Yoga at one time, and next Karma Yoga' . This is what is objected to: In the second chapter, you have said that Karma Yoga alone should be practised first by an aspirant for release; and that the vision of the self should be achieved by means of Jnana Yoga by one whose mind has its blemishes washed away by Karma Yoga. Again, in the third and fourth chapters, you have praised Karma Yoga or devotion to Karma as better than Jnana Yoga even for one who has attained the stage of Jnana Yoga, and that, as a means of attaining the self, it (Karma Yoga) is independent of Jnana Yoga. Therefore, of these two, Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga --- tell me precisely which by itself is superior, i.e., most excellent, being more easy to practise, and quicker to confer the vision of the self.

5.2 The Lord said -- Even while granting that some persons are competent for the practice of Jnana Yoga exclusively, it has to be conceded that renunciation, i.e., Jnana Yoga, and Karma Yoga can be practised as independent of each other in the pursuit of the highest excellence. Still, of these two, Karma Yoga excels over the renunciation of actions, i.e., Jnana Yoga. Sri Krsna explains why this is so.

5.3 That Karma Yogin, who, being satisfied with the experience of the self implied in Karma Yoga, does not desire anything different therefrom and consequently does not hate anything, and who, because of this, resignedly endures the pairs of opposites --- he should be understood as ever given to renunciation, i.e., even devoted to Jnana Yoga. Such a one therefore is freed from bondage because of his being firmly devoted to Karma Yoga which is easy to practise. The independence of Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga from each other as means for attainment of the self is now declared.

5.4 Those who say that Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga are distinct because of the difference in results, are children, i.e., are persons with incomplete knowledge; they do not know the entire truth. The meaning is that they do not possess true knowledge, who say that Karma Yoga results in Jnana Yoga only and that Jnana Yoga alone results in the vision of the self and that the two are thus distinct because of the difference in their fruits. ut on the contrary as both have only the vision of the self as the fruit, a person who is firmly set in one of them, wins that one fruit common to both. Sri Krsna further expounds the same:

5.5 The fruit in the form of the vision of the self which is attained by the Sankhyans (i.e.) Jnana Yogins, the same is attained alone by those who are Karma Yogins. He alone is wise who sees that Sankhya and the Yoga are one and the same because of their having the same result. Sri Krsna points out, if the aforesaid is the case, wherein the difference between them lies.

5.6 Renunciation, i.e., Jnana Yoga, cannot be attained without Yoga, i.e., Karma Yoga. A person following Yoga, i.e., following Karma Yoga, being himself a Muni, i.e., one engaged in the contemplation of self, after practising Karma Yoga reaches with ease the rahman i.e., attains the self soon, i.e., in a short time. ut one following Jnana Yoga by itself, completes Jnana Yoga with great difficulty only. On account of this great difficulty, he attains the self after a long period only.

5.7 ut a Karma Yogin remains engaged in the performance of pure actions prescribed by the Sastras, which are of the nature of propitiation of the Supreme Person. y this, he becomes purified in mind. He thus subdues his self, i.e., subdues his mind easily, because his mind is engaged in the virtuous actions he has been performing before. Therefore his senses are subdued. His self is said to have become the self of all beings. ecause of his being devoted to contemplation on the true nature of the self, he finds that his self is similar to the self of all beings like gods etc. One who contemplates on the true nature of the self understands that all selves are of the same form or nature. The distinctions obtaining among gods, men etc., cannot pertain to the form of the

self, because those distinctions are founded on particular modifications of Prakrti i.e., the bodies of beings. Sri Krsna will teach: ' For the rahman (an individual self), when untainted, is the same everywhere' (5.19). The meaning of this is that when dissociated from the Prakriti, i.e., the body, the self is of the same nature everywhere, i.e., in the bodies of gods, men etc. It is of the same form of knowledge. The meaning is that one, who has become enlightened in this way, active though he be, is not tainted on account of erroneously conceiving what is other than the self (the body) as the self. He is not at all associated therewith. Therefore, he attains the self without any delay. As Karma Yoga is superior to Jnana Yoga because it is more easily pursued and is more rapidly efficacious in securing the fruits, listen to its requirement:

5.8 - 5.9 Thus he who knows the truth concerning the self should reflect in mind that the ear and the other organs of sensation (Jnanendriyas) as also organs of action (Karmendriyas) and the vital currents (the Pranas) are occupied with their own respective objects. Thus he should know, ' I do not do anything at all.' He should reflect, ' My intrinsic nature is one of knowledge. The sense of agency comes because of the association of the self with the senses and the Pranas which are rooted in Karma. It does not spring from my essential nature.'

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5.10 Here the term, rahman denotes Prakrti. Later on Sri Krsna will say: ' The great rahman is My womb' (14.3). Since Prakrti abides in the form of senses which are particular off-shoots of Prakrti, he who, as said in the passage beginning with ' Even though he is seeing, hearing ...' (5.8), understands that

all actions proceed from rahman (Prakrti); renounces all attachment while engaging himself in all actions, reflecting, ' I am doing nothing.' Such a person, though existing in contact with Prakrti, is not contaminated by sin which is the result of the wrong identification of the Atman with Prakrti and is the cause of bondage. Just as a lotus leaf is not wetted by water, actions do not affect or defile a person with sin, if he is free from such identification with the body.

5.11 Renouncing attachment to heaven etc., the Yogins perform actions accomplishable by the body, the mind and the intellect for the purification of themselves, i.e., for annulling the bonds of his previous Karma which have afected the self and which involve the self in Samsara.

5.12 A Yogin is one who has no hankering for fruits other than the self, and who is exclusively devoted to the self. If a man renounces the fruits of actions and performs actions merely for the purification of himself, he attains lasting peace, i.e., he attains bliss which is of the form of lasting experience of the self. The unsteady person is one who is inclined towards fruits other than the self. He has turned himself away from the vision of the self. eing impelled by desire, he becomes attached to fruits of actions, and remains bound for ever by them. That is, he becomes a perpetual Samsarin or one involved in transmigratory cycle endlessly. What is said is this: Free of attachment for fruits and attributing one' s actions to Prakrti which has developed into the form of senses, one should perform actions merely to free the self from bondage. Next, the shifting of agency to Prakrti, from which the body has come into existence, is described:

5.13 The embodied self who is self-controlled, renounces all actions to the city of nine gates, i.e., the body with its sensory and motor functions which are nine in number. He discriminates that all actions are due to conjunction of the self with the body which is rooted in previous Karmas, and is not by Its own nature. [It means that the self merely rests in the body, without any identification with bodily activities.] Sri Krsna now teaches the natural condition of the self as It is:

5.14 When the world of embodied selves exists in conjunction with the Prakrti in the form of gods, animals, men, immobile things etc., the master (Prabhu i.e., the Jiva who is the master of the body), who is not subject to Karma and is established in Its own essential nature, does not bring about: (i) the agency of gods, men etc. (ii) their manifold and particular actions and (iii) their connection with the fruits in the form of embodiment as gods etc., resulting from their actions. Who then brings about agency etc.? It is only the tendencies that act. A tendency (Svabhava) is subtle impressions (Vasanas) originating from Prakrti. The meaning is that agency, etc., do not originate from the natural or pristine condition of the self but are generated by the subtle impressions created by misconceiving those forms of Prakrti etc., as of the self. This is the result of the conjunction of the self with Prakrti in the form of gods, etc., which has been generated by the flow of previous Karmas brought about in beginningless time.

5.15 ecause, It, the Atman is ' all-pervading' , i.e., is not limited to particular area or space included in the bodies of gods, men etc.; It is not the relative or the enemy of any one. For this reason It does not take away or remove the evil or suffering of anyone such as a son who is related and therefore dear to one; nor does It take away, i.e., remove the happiness of anyone whom It deems with aversion. All this is the effect of Vasanas or subtle impressions of Prakrti. How does do these contrary Vasanas originte in the case of one whose intrinsic nature is a described above? In answer it is said that knowledge is enveloped by the darkness of ignorance. The Atman' s knowledge is enveloped, i.e., contracted by preceding Karmas which are opposed to knowledge, so that a person may be qualified to experience the fruits of his own Karma. It is by this Karma, which contracts knowledge, and can join the Jiva with the bodies of gods etc., that the misconception that the bodies are the selves is produced. Consequently there will originate the Vasanas or the unconscious subtle impressions born of such misapprehension of the self and the inclination to undertake actions corresponding to them. Sri Krsna now brings into proper sequence what has been taught before in the following verses: ' You will completely cross over the sea of all your sins with the boat of knowledge' (4.36), and ' The fire of knowledge reduces all Karmas to ashes in

the same way' (4.37), and ' For there is no purifier here equal to knowledge' (4.38).

5.16 While all these selves are thus deluded, in the case of enlightened souls, their delusive ignorance --- which envelops knowledge and which is of the form of accumulated, beginningless and endless Karma --- is destroyed by knowledge. As already described this knowledge is produced by the teachings of the scriptures about the real nature of the self, which are enriched by daily practice. The purity of this knowledge is unexcelled. And in the case of those selves who regain the knowledge that is natural to Them, it is found that it is unlimited and uncontracted and illumining everything like the sun. Plurality of the selves in Their essence is expressly mentioned in the case of those whose ignorance is overcome, in the expression ' for those' in the text. What was stated at the commencement, ' There never was a time when I did not exist' (2.12) is expressed here with greater clarity. Moreover, this plurality is not due to limiting adjuncts imposed on a single universal self. For, as stated here, there cannot be any trace of such adjuncts for those whose ignorance is destroyed, and still They are described as a plurality. Hence knowledge is taught as an attribute inseparable from the essential nature of the self, because a difference between the self and its knowledge is made out in the statement, ' Knowledge, in their case illuminates like the sun' . y the illustration of the sun, the relation of the knower to his knowledge is brought out to be similar to the luminous object and its luminosity. Therefore, it is appropriate to understand that knowledge contracts by Karma in the stage of Samsara and expands in the stage of Moksa (release). [In this system the Atman has two forms of Jnana or Knowledge --- Dharmi-Jnana (self-awareness) and Dharma-bhuta-Jnana (awareness of objects other than itself). It is the latter that is contracted by ignorance and expands by knowledge. See Intrdocution.]

5.17 ' Those whose intellects pursue It,' i.e., those who have determined to have the vision of the self in this way; ' those whose minds think about It,' i.e., those whose minds have the self for their aim, those who undergo discipline for It, i.e., those who are devoted to the practices for Its attainment; ' those who hold It as their highest object,' i.e., those who consider It as their highest goal -

-- such persons, having their previous impurities cleansed by the knowledge which is practised in this way, attain the self as taught. ' From that state there is no return'   --- the state from which there is no return means the state of the self. The meaning is that they attain the self which rests in Its own nature.

5.18 The sages are those who know the real nature of the self in all beings. They see the selves to be of the same nature, though they are perceived in extremely dissimlar embodiments such as those of one endowed with learning and humility, a mere rahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog, a dog-eater etc., because they all have the same form of knowledge in their nature as the Atman. The dissimilarity of the forms observed is due to Prakrti (body) and not to any dissimilarity in the self; consequently they, the wise, perceive the self as the same everywhere, because all selves, though distinct, have the same form of knowledge.

5.19 y those whose minds rest in equalness with regard to all selves in the aforesaid manner, even here, i.e., even at the stage of executing the means, Samsara is overcome. For the rahman is of the same nature everywhere when uncontaminated. The meaning is that the substance of self, when free from the contaminations resulting from contact with the Prakrti (body), is the same everywhere i.e., as the rahman (the Atman). If they are fixed in the equality of all selves, they verily abide in rahman. The abidance in the rahman is verily the conquest of Samsara. Those who contemplate on the sameness of all selves, because of their having the form of knowledge, they are liberated. Sri Krsna now teaches that mode of life by following which the maturity of knowledge in the form of sameness of vision comes to a Karma Yogin.

5.20 Whatever is experienced as pleasant by one staying in a body and remaining in a particular condition because of the subtle impressions of his old Karmas, and whatever is experienced as unpleasant --- on attaining those two types of experiences, one should not feel joy or grief. How? By having the mind on that ' Which is steadfast'   i.e., the self, ' Undeluded,'   i.e., one must be free from the delusion of identity of the steadfast self with the transient body. And how can this be? He who knows brahman and abides in brahman, i.e., by

becoming a knower of brahman by instruction by the teachers --- such a person abides steadily, engaged in the practices towards winning brahman. What is said is this: From the instructions received from the sages who know the truth, one should learn what has to be learnt about the self. Endeavouring to actualise the same, one does not consider the body as the self and remains fixed in the joyous experience of the vision of the steadfast self. Let him not rejoice and grieve when he experiences pleasant and unpleasant things, as such experiences result from the Prakrti and are transient.

5.21 He who finds happiness in the self within himself, his mind detached from external contact in the manner already mentioned, i.e., from experience of objects other than the self --- such a person abandoning the contemplation on Prakrti or bodily experiences, has his mind engaged in the contemplation on brahman i.e., the Atman. Thus he attains everlasting bliss which consists in the experience of brahman (the self). Sri Krsna speaks of the abandonment of material pleasure as easy:

5.22 Those pleasures which result from the contact of sense objects with the senses, are the wombs of pain, i.e., have pain as their ultimate fruit ' They have a beginning and an end,' i.e., they are seen to remain only for a brief period and the reaction that follows their cessation is painful. He who knows what they themselves are, i.e., know themselves as Atman, will not find pleasure in them.

5.23 When a man is able to withstand, i.e., to control the impulses of emotions like desire and anger by his longing for the experience of self, he is released ' here itself from the body,' i.e., even during the state when he is practising the means for release, he gains the capacity for experiencing the self. But he becomes blessed by the experience and gets immersed in the bliss of the self only after the fall of the body (at the end of his Prarabdha or operative Karma). [The implication is that in this system there is no Jivan-Mukti or complete liberation even when the body is alive. Only the state of Sthita-prajna or of ' one of steady wisdom' can be attained by an embodied Jiva.]

5.24 He who, renouncing all the experiences of outside objects, ' finds joy within,'   i.e., finds his sole joy in experiencing the self; ' who has his pleasure within,'   i.e., whose pleasure-garden is the self; and with regard to whom the self increases his happiness by Its own qualities like bliss, knowledge, sinlessness, etc.; ' whose light is within,'   i.e., who lives, directing his knowledge solely on the self --- a person of such a description is the Yogin, who ' having become the rahman (the self), attains the bliss of the rahman'   i.e., the bliss of experiencing the self.

5.25 The sages are seers who are devoted to the vision of the self. For them the pairs of opposites are annulled; i.e., they are freed from pairs of opposites like cold and heat, etc. ' They have their minds well subdued,'   i.e., their minds are directed to the self. ' They are devoted to the welfare of all beings,'   i.e., they are interested in the welfare of all beings like their own selves. Those persons who are like this have all their impurities, which are incompatible with the attainment of the self, annulled, and they attain to the bliss of the brahman. For those possessing the characteristics mentioned above, Sri Krsna now teaches that the brahman is easy to attain.

5.26 To those who are free from desire and wrath; ' who are wont to exert themselves'   i.e., who are practising self-control; whose ' thought is controlled,'   i.e., whose minds are subdued; ' who have conquered them,'   i.e., whose minds are under their control --- to such persons the beatitude of the brahman is close at hand. The beatitude of the brahman is already in hand to persons of this type. Sri Krsna concludes the examination of Karma Yoga already stated, as reaching the highest point in the practice of mental concentration (Yoga) having for its object the vision of the self:

5.27 - 5.28 ' Shutting off all contact with outside objects,'   i.e., stopping the outward functioning of the senses; seated with his trunk straightened in a posture fit for meditation (Yoga); ' fixing the gaze between the eye-brows,'   i.e., at the root of the nose where the eye-brows meet; ' equalising inward and outward breaths,'   i.e., making exhalatory and inhalatory breath move equally: making the senses, Manas and intellect no longer capable of anything except

the vision of the self, consequently being free from ' desire, fear and wrath' ; ' who is intent on release as his final goal,' i.e., having release as his only aim --- the sage who is thus intent on the vision of the self ' is indeed liberated for ever,' i.e., he is almost a liberated person, as he would soon be in the ultimate stage of fruition. Sri Krsna now says that Karma Yoga, described above, which is facilitated by the performance of obligatory and occasional rites and which culminates in meditation (Yoga), is easy to practise:

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5.29 Knowing Me as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, as the Supreme Lord of all the worlds, and as the Friend of every being, he attains peace, i.e., wins happiness even while performing Karma Yoga. ' Him who is the Supreme Lord of all worlds' means ' Him who is the Lord of all the lords of the worlds.' For the Sruti says: ' Him who is the supreme mighty Lord of lords' (Sve. U., 6.7). The meaning is that knowing Me as the Supreme Lord of all the worlds and the ' friend' of all and considering Karma Yoga to be My worship, he becomes gladly engaged in it. All beings endeavour to please a ' friend' .

BHAGAVADGITA

English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda

Chapter 6

6.1 The Lord said -- He who, without depending on such fruits of works as heaven, etc., performs them, reflecting, ' The performance of works alone is my duty (Karya). Works themselves are my sole aim, because they are a form of worship of the Supreme Person who is our Friend in every way. There is nothing other than Him to be gained by them' --- such a person is a Sannyasin, i.e., one devoted to Jnana Yoga, and also a Karma Yogin, i.e., one devoted to Karma Yoga. He is intent on both these, which is the means for attaining Yoga, which is of the nature of the vision of the self. ' And not he who maintains no sacred fires and performs no works,' i.e., not he who is disinclined to perform the enjoined works such as sacrifices, etc., nor he who is devoted to mere knowledge. The meaning is that such a person is devoted only to knowledge, whereas a person who is devoted to Karma Yoga has both knowledge and works. Now Sri Krsna teaches that there is an element of knowledge in the Karma Yoga as defined above.

6.2 Know Karma Yoga only to be that which they call as Sannyasa i.e., as Jnana Yoga or knowledge of the real nature of the self. Sri Krsna substantiates this by the words, ' For no one whose delusive identification of the body with the self is not abandoned, becomes a true Karma Yogin.' ' One whose delusion is abandoned is one by whom the delusion of identifying the self with Prakrti (body), which is in reality distinct from the self, is not rejected by the contemplation of the real nature of the self. One who is not of this kind is one whose delusion is not abandoned. One who is not of this kind cannot become a Karma Yogin of the type described here. It has already been said: ' He whose every undertaking is free from desire for fruits and delusive identification of the body with the self ...' (4.19). Sri Krsna now teaches that by Karma Yoga alone one succeeds in Yoga without the risk of fall.

6.3 Karma Yoga is said to be the means for an aspirant for release who ' seeks to climb the heights of Yoga,' i.e., the vision of the self. For the same person,

when he has climbed the ' heights of Yoga,' i.e., when he is established in Yoga --- tranquility, i.e., freedom from actions is said to be the means. A man should perform actions until he has attained release (Moksa) in the form of the vision of the self. Full release comes only with the fall of the body. The ' vision of the self' referred to here is called Moksa by courtesy. When does not become established in Yoga? Sri Krsna replies:

6.4 When this Yogin, because of his natural disposition to the experience of the self, loses attachment, i.e., gets detached from sense-objects, i.e., things other than the self, and actions associated with them --- then he has abandoned all desires and is said to have climbed the heights of Yoga. Therefore, for one wishing to climb to Yoga, but is still disposed to the experience of the sense-objects, Karma Yoga consisting of the practice of detachment to these objects, becomes the cause for success in Yoga. Therefore one who wishes to climb to Yoga must perform Karma Yoga consisting in the practice of detachment from sense-objects. Sri Krsna further elucidates the same:

6.5 y the self (Atman), i.e., by the mind, which is unattached to sense-objects, one should raise the self. One should not allow the self to sink by a mind which is of the contrary kind. ' For the self alone,' i.e., the mind alone is the friend of the self; and it alone is the foe of the self. [The figure of speech here is of Samsara as the ocean in which the individual self is like an object with liability to sink. What causes its sinking is the lingering attachments of the mind to some objects, though in the discipline of Jnana Yoga one may keep aloof from such objects. A mind with such attachments is the foe and without them, the friend.]

6.6 A person whose mind is conquered by himself in relation to sense-objects, has that mind as his friend. In the case of one whose mind is not conquered in this way, his own mind, like an enemy, remains hostile. The meaning is that it acts, against his attainment of supreme beatitude. It has been stated by hagavan Parasara also: ' The mind of man is the cause both of his bondage and his release. Its addiction to sense objects is the cause of his bondage; its

separation from sense objects is the means of one' s release' (V. P., 6.7.28). The proper condition for the beginning of Yoga is now taught:

6.7 Of him whose self is conquered, i.e., whose mind is conquered, whose mind is free from fluctuations and who is very calm, ' the great self' becomes well secured, i.e., exceedingly well secured in connection with heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and honour and dishonour. Here the individual self (Pratyagatman) is called ' the great self' (Paramatman), as the context justifies this only. It can also be called ' great' , because it is at a higher stage relatively to previous successive stages. Or the word may be construed as follows: The self is secured greatly --- Atma parma samahitah. [In any case it should not be taken as the Supreme eing].

6.8 That Karma Yogin whose mind is content with the knowledge of the self and the knowledge of the difference, i.e., whose mind is content with the knowledge concerning the real nature of the self as well as with the knowledge of the difference of Its nature from Prakrti; ' who is established in the self' (Kutasthah), i.e., who remains as the self which is of the uniform nature of knowledge in all stages of evolution as men, gods etc. whose senses are therefore subdued; and to whom ' earth, stone and gold are of equal value' because of his lack of interest in any material objects of enjoyment on account of his intense earnestness to know the real nature of the self as different from Prakrti --- he, that Karma Yogi, is called integrated i.e., fit for the practice of Yoga which is of the nature of the vision of the self. And also.

6.9 ' Well-wishers' (Suhrt) are those who wish one well, regardless of differences in age. ' Friends' (Mitra) are well-wisheres of equal age. ' Foes' (Ari) are those who wish ill to one because of some particular cause. ' The indifferent' (Udasina) are those devoid of both friendship and hostility because of the absence of causes for both; ' neutrals' (Madhyastha) are those who are by their very nature incapable of both friendship and hostility. ' The hateful' are those who wish ill to one even from birth. ' Relations' are those who bear goodwill from birth. ' The good' are those devoted to virtue. ' The sinful' are those given to sin. ecause of the self being the only end of Yoga, and because

of there being no gain and no opposition from well-wishers, friends, etc., he who could regard them all with an equal eye as selves, excels in respect of fitness for the practice of Yoga.

6.10 The Yogin who is steady in the practice of Karma Yoga, should ' constantly' , i.e., daily when practising Yoga, fix his mind to the practice of Yoga, i.e., make himself engaged in the vision of the self. He must remain in a ' solitary place,' i.e., a place devoid of crowd and noise. And even there he must be ' all alone,' i.e., must not have a second person with him. He should ' control his thought and mind,' i.e., he should control the activities of thinking. He must be free from ' desire' , i.e., he should not depend on anything except the self and be without the ' sense of possession,' without the idea of mineness with regard to anything other than the self.

6.11 - 6.12 ' In a clean spot,' i.e., in a spot pure in itself, not owned or controlled by impure persons and untouched by impure things; having ' established a firm seat,' a seat made of wood or similar material, which is neither too high nor too low; which is covered with cloth, deer-skin and Kusa grass in the reverse order; seated on it in a way which promotes the serenity of mind; having the mind concentrated on Yoga; and holding the activities of the mind and senses in check in all ways --- he should practise ' Yoga' , i.e., practise the vision of the self for ' the purification of the self,' i.e., to end his bondage.

6.11 - 6.12 ' In a clean spot,' i.e., in a spot pure in itself, not owned or controlled by impure persons and untouched by impure things; having ' established a firm seat,' a seat made of wood or similar material, which is neither too high nor too low; which is covered with cloth, deer-skin and Kusa grass in the reverse order; seated on it in a way which promotes the serenity of mind; having the mind concentrated on Yoga; and holding the activities of the mind and senses in check in all ways --- he should practise ' Yoga' , i.e., practise the vision of the self for ' the purification of the self,' i.e., to end his bondage.

6.13 - 6.14 Keeping the trunk, head and neck erect and motionless; well seated in order to be steady; looking not in any direction but gazing at the tip

of the nose; serene, i.e., holding the mind extremely peaceful; fearless; firm in the vow of celibacy; holding the mind in check; and fixing his thoughts on Me --- he should sit in Yoga, i.e., remain concentrated and intent on Me, i.e., he should concentrating on Me only.

6.13 - 6.14 Keeping the trunk, head and neck erect and motionless; well seated in order to be steady; looking not in any direction but gazing at the tip of the nose; serene, i.e., holding the mind extremely peaceful; fearless; firm in the vow of celibacy; holding the mind in check; and fixing his thoughts on Me --- he should sit in Yoga, i.e., remain concentrated and intent on Me, i.e., he should concentrating on Me only.

6.15 ' Ever applying his mind on Me,' i.e., the Supreme brahman, the Supreme Person and the holy and auspicious object of meditation, ' the Yogin of controlled mind,' i.e., one having his mind steady because of his being purified in mind through contact with Me, comes to the peace which abides in Me, which is of the highest degree of beatitude. That means he comes to the peace which is the supreme end of beatitude which abides in Me. For the person who commences Yoga of the self, Sri Krsna, after thus teaching how the mind should be fixed on the Lord, who is the holy and auspicious object of meditation, proceeds in order to effect the purification of the mind, to speak of the other side of Yoga:

6.16 Over-eating and excessive fasting are opposed to Yoga. So also are excessive recreation and non-recreation, too much of sleep and too much of vigil. So too, are overwork and idleness.

6.17 The ' yoga which destroys all sorrows,' i.e., unties bondages, is successfully practised by him who is temperate in eating and recreation, temperate in exertion, and temperate in sleep and vigil.

6.18 When the mind which usually goes after sense enjoyments, abandons such desires and ' rests on the self alone,' i.e., becomes well-settled on account of discerning unsurpassable good in the self alone and rests there

alone steadily, without movement --- then, being ' free of yearning for all desires,' one is said to be integrated. He is said to be fit for Yoga.

6.19 As a lamp does not flicker in a windless place, i.e., does not move, but remains steady with its illumination --- this is the simile used to illustrate the nature of the self of the Yogin who has subdued his mind, who has got rid of all other kinds of mental activity and who is practising Yoga concerning the self. The meaning is that the self remains with its steadily illumining light of knowledge because all other activities of the mind have ceased, just as a lamp kept in a windless place has an unflickering flame.

6.20 - 6.23 Where, through the practice of Yoga, the mind, which is subdued everywhere by such practice, ' rejoices' , i.e., rejoices in surpassing felicity; and where, perceiving through Yoga ' the self (Atman)' by ' the mind (Atman)' one is delighted by the self and indifferent to all other objects; and where, through Yoga, one ' knows' , i.e., experiences that infinite happiness which can be grasped only by the ' intellect' contemplating on the self, but is beyond the grasp of the senses; where, remaining in that Yoga, one does not ' swerve from that state,' because of the overwhelming happiness that state confers; having gained which, he desires for it alone, even when he is awakened from Yoga, and does not hold anything else as a gain; where one is not moved even by ' the heaviest sorrow' caused by any berevaement like that of a virtuous son --- let him know that disunion from all union with pain, i.e., which forms the opposite of union with pain, is called by the term Yoga. This Yoga must be practised with the determination of its nature as such from the beginning with a mind free from despondency, i.e., with zestful exaltation.

6.24 - 6.25 There are two kinds of desires: 1) those born of contact between the senses and objects like heat, cold etc.; 2) those generated by our mind (will) like that for sons, land etc. Of these, the latter type of desires are by their own nature relinquishable. Relinquishing all these by the mind through contemplation on their lack of association with the self; having relinquished the ideas of pleasure and pain in respect of unavoidable desires resulting from contact; restraining all the senses on all sides, i.e., from contact with all their objects --- one should think of nothing else, i.e., other than the self. Little by little ' with the help of intellect controlled by firm resolution,' i.e., by the power of discrimination, one should think of nothing else, having fixed the mind on the self.

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6.26 Wherever the mind, on account of its fickle and unsteady nature, wanders, because of its proclivity to sense-objects, he should, subduing the mind everywhere with effort, bring it under control in order to remain in the self

alone by contemplating on the incomparable bliss therein.

6.27 Supreme happiness, which is of the nature of experience of the self in its essential nature comes to this Yogin whose ' mind is at peace,' i.e., whose mind does not swerve from the self, whose mind abides in the self; whose impurities are thereby completely burnt away; whose Rajas is thereby ' wholly annulled,' i.e., in whom the quality of Rajas is destroyed; and who has thus become the rahman, i.e., who remains steady in his essential nature as the Atman. ' Hi' (for) is added to indicate reason. The meaning is this: ' On account of the nature of the self which has the form of supreme bliss.'

6.28 Thus, in the above --- said manner, devoting himself to the Yoga of the self and by that means expelling all old impurities, the Yogin attains ' perfect' , i.e., boundless felicity at all times easily, without stress and strain. The felicity is born of the contact with the rahman (Atman), meaning the joy of experience of the rahman. Now Sri Krsna says that the mature stage of Yoga consists of four degrees, as stated in the succeeding verses from 29th to 32nd.

6.29 (i) On account of the similarity between one self and other selves when They are separated from Prakrti (i.e., the body), all selves are by Themselves only of the nature of knowledge. Inequalities pertain only to Prakrti or the bodies they are embodied in. One whose mind is fixed in Yoga has the experience of the sameness of the nature of all the selves as centres of intelligence, the perceived difference being caused only by the body. When separated from the body all are alike because of their being forms of centres of intelligence. An enlightened Yogin therefore sees himself as abiding in all beings and all beings abiding in his self in the sense that he sees the similarity of the selves in himself and in every being. When one self is visualised, all selves become visulaised, because of the similarity of all selves. This is supported by the statements: ' He sees sameness everywhere' (6.29). The same is again referred to in, ' This Yoga of equality which has been declared by you' (6.33), and the statement ' The rahman when uncontaminated is the same everywhere' (5.19).

6.30 (ii) He who, having reached the highest stage of maturity, views similarity of nature with Me, i.e., sees similarity of all selves to Myself when They are freed from good and evil and when they remain in Their own essence, as declared in the Sruti, ' Stainless he attains supreme degree of equality' (Mun. U., 3.1.3); and ' sees Me in all selves and sees all selves in Me.' That is, on viewing one of Them (selves), one views another also to be the same, because of their similarity to one another. To him who perceives the nature of his own self, I am not lost on account of My similarity to him i.e., I do not become invisible to him. He (the Yogin) viewing his own self as similar to Me, always remains within My sight when I am viewing Myself, because of similarity of his self with Me. Sri Krsna describes a still more mature steps (of Yoga):

6.31 (iii) The Yogin who, fixed in the state of Yoga in oneness because he has the same form of uncontracted knowledge (as Myself), worships Me steadfastly by renouncing the differences of the Prakrti (i.e., of the body) --- then that Yogin, even while coming out of Yoga, howsoever he may live, views Me only, when viewing his own self and all other beings. The meaning is that he views his similarity to Myself in his own self and in the self of all beings. Now Sri Krsna proceeds to speak of the maturest stage beyond this:

6.32 (iv) He who --- because of the similarity between his own self and other selves, as they are all constituted similarly of uncontracted knowledge in their essential being --- views the pleasures in the form of the birth of a son and the sorrows in the form of the death of a son of his own and of others, as equal, on the ground of their equal unrelatedness to such pleasures and pains to him. Viewing his own pleasures and pains of the above description as being not different from those of others of the same kind --- tht Yogin is deemed the highest; he is judged as having reached the summit of Yoga. [The idea is to prevent misconstruing the verse as meaning that one shares the joy and misery of all as his own. It means only that the highest type of yogins understand that the self is unrelated to the pain and pleasures of his own body-mind. He understands also that the same is the case with other selves.]

6.33 Arjuna said -- This Yoga as explained by you consists in maintaining equality of vision everywhere, viz., i) among themselves which have been so far known to be of different kinds such as gods and men, and ii) between the individual selves and the Supreme, in so far as (a) all the selves are of the same form of knowledge, and (b) in so far as the individual self (i.e., the released soul) and the Supreme are alike free from Karma. I do not see how this Yoga can be steadily established in my mind, fickle as the mind is.

6.34 For the mind, which is found to be fickle even in matters incessantly practised, cannot be firmly fixed by a person in one place. It agitates that person violently and flies away stubbornly elsewhere. Regarding such a mind, which by nature is fickle even in matters practised, I regard that its restraint and fixing in the self, which is of quite opposite nature, is as difficult as restraining a strong contrary gale with such things as a fragile fan etc. The meaning is that the means for the restraint of the mind should be explained.

6.35 The Lord said -- No doubt, the mind is hard to subdue on account of its fickle nature. However, it can be subdued with difficulty by cultivating favourable attitude in the direction of the self by repeated contemplation of Its being a mind of auspicious attributes (these being eternality, self-luminosity, bliss, freedom from Karma, purity etc.), and by the absence of hankering produced by seeing the host of evil qualities in objects other than the self hankered for.

6.36 Yoga is hard to attain even in spite of great efforts by one of unrestrained self, i.e., of unrestrained mind. But the same Yoga which is of the form of sameness of vision can be attained by proper means by one who is striving, whose ' mind is subdued,' i.e., by one whose mind is conquered by works (Karma Yoga) taught before, which is of the nature of My worship and which includes within itself knowledge (Jnana). Then Arjuna puts questions in order to hear the greatness of Yoga, as it really is, which he has already heard about at the beginning of the teaching, ' Here there is no loss of effort' (2.40). There the greatness of Karma Yoga as inclusive of knowledge of the self with Yoga

as its culmination was taught. This alone is the real greatness of Yoga.

6.37 - 6.39 Arjuna said -- What way does he go, who has embarked on Yoga endowed with faith, but who by inadequacy of exertion in practice, does not gain success in Yoga and has his mind wandering from Yoga? Does he not perish like a small piece of cloud torn from a large mass of cloud --- perish without reaching another large mass of cloud? Now does he not fall away from both (sides)? He has no support and is confused on the path leading to the rahman. He is without any support in the sense that Karma or rituals which constitutes the means of heaven etc., does not give support for a person who is devoid of attachment to fruits; for Karma is the means for generating its own fruits. He is also confused in the path leading to the rahman on which he has just begun to traverse; He has lost his way. Does he then get lost by falling down from both sides, these being attainment of heaven on the one hand and liberation on the other. Does he not thus perish? You should remove this doubt altogether from my mind; for there is no other remover of this doubt than You, who always perceive directly all matters simultaneously.

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6.40 The Lord said -- Neither here nor there is destruction for him who has begun Yoga with faith and has then fallen away from it. The meaning is that there is no destruction either in the form of failure of attainment of desires or in the form of Pratyavaya, which means the attainment of what is undesirable because of defects in the performance of works. Therefore no one who practises this incomparably auspicious Yoga ever comes to an evil end in the present, past or future. Sri Krsna explains how this is so:

6.41 This person, who had wandered away from Yoga because of desire for whatever kind of enjoyments, he will gain those very enjoyments through the excellence of Yoga alone. Having attained to the worlds of those who do meritorious acts, he will dwell there for a long time, i.e., till his desire for such enjoyments gets exhausted. Then, devoid of desire for these enjoyment, this person who has swerved from Yoga at the very beginning of Yoga, is born, by virtue of the excellence of Yoga, in a family of those who are competent to practise Yoga.

6.42 If one swerves from the right path at an advanced stage of Yoga, he will be born in a family of wise Yogins who practise Yoga and are themselves capable of teaching Yoga. Thus, these two types of birth --- one in the family of those who are fit to practise Yoga and the other in that of accomplished Yogins --- are hardly met with among common people in this world. ut Yoga is of such great potentiality that even this rare blessing is achieved through it.

6.43 - 6.44 There, in that existence, he regains the mental disposition for Yoga that he had in the previous birth. Like one awakened from sleep, he strives again from where he had left before attaining complete success. He strives so as not to be defeated by impediments. This person who has fallen away from Yoga is borne on towards Yoga alone by his previous practice, i.e., by the older practice with regard to Yoga. This power of Yoga is well known. Even a person, who has not engaged in Yoga but has only been desirous of knowing Yoga, i.e., has failed to follow it up, acquries once again the same desire to practise Yoga. He then practises Yoga, of which the first stage is Karma Yoga, and transcends Sabda-brahman (or rahman which is denotable by words). The Sabda-brahman is the rahman capable of manifesting as gods, men, earth, sky, heaven etc., namely, Prakrti. The meaning is that having been liberated from the bonds of Prakrti, he attains the self which is incapable of being named by such words as gods, men etc., and which comprises solely of knowledge and beatitude. After thus describing the glory of Yoga the verse says:

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6.45 ecause of such excellence of Yoga, through accumulation of merit collected in many births the Yogin striving earnestly, becomes cleansed from stains. Having become perfected, he reaches the supreme state, even though he had once gone astray. Sri Krsna now speaks of the superiority of the Yogin above all others because of his being devoted to the supreme goal of human existence.

6.46 Whatever end of human endeavour is attained by mere austerity, by knowledge of different subjects (i.e., different from experience of the self) and by mere rituals like the horse-sacrifice etc., ---- greater than all these is the end achieved through Yoga. Consequently the Yogin is superior to those who practise austerity, to those who possess learning and to those who perform rituals. Therefore, O Arjuna, become a Yogin. Thus, so far the vision of the self, which has been expounded in the teaching of Prajapati as forming a part of supreme Vidya, has been taught; then Sri Krsna extols that supreme Vidya:

6.47 ' Yoginam' , which is the genitive case, has to be taken in the sense of the ablative. In the verses beginning with, ' He sees the self as abiding in all beings' (6.29), Yogins at four degrees of attainment have been mentioned. Since the Yogin who is now mentioned in this passage cannot be included in the four types mentioned earlier, the genitive case specifying one out of many will be inappropriate here. In ' api sarvesam,' those who practise austerities etc., are referred to by the word ' sarva' (all). According to the principle set forth, here also the case ending has to be taken as ablative. The meaning therefore is that the Yogin who is now referred to, is the most integrated compared with those mentioned earlier and all other types. Compared to this

Yogin, the differences in point of superiority and inferiority among the other Yogins such as the performers of austerities etc., are of no significance like mustard-seeds compared to Mount Meru. Even though there exists smallness and bigness in relation to one another among mustard-seeds, still when compared to Meru, such distinctions among them have no significance, as they are all small compared to Meru. I consider him the most integrated who, with his innermost self, has his mind fixed on Me, on account of My being the only object of his overflowing love and also on account of his having a nature which cannot be supported by anything other than Myself; who has ' faith,' i.e., who strives rapidly to attain Me because of his being unable to bear a moment' s separation from Me on account of My being very dear to him; and who ' worships Me,' i.e., serves Me with devotion and meditates on Me --- Me whose sportive delight brings about the origination, sustentation and dissolution of the entire cosmos filled with multifarious and innumerable objects of enjoyment, enjoyers, means and places of enjoyment; who is untouched by any evil without exception; whose divine figure is the treasue-house of innumerable multitudes of auspicious, unlimited and unsurpassed attributes such as knowledge, power, lordship, energy, potency and splendour; whose divine figure is the treasure-house of infinite, unsurpassed attributes agreeable and highly worthy, such as radiance, beauty, fragrance, tenderness, pervading sweetness and youthfulness which are uniform, inconceivable and divine, wondrous, eternal and flawless; whose essential nature and qualities transcend all thought and words; who is the great ocean of compassion, condescension, paternal love and beauty; who is the impartial refuge of all beings without exception and without considerations of any difference; who is the reliever of the distress of supplicants; who is the great, unfathomable ocean of affection for supplicants; who has become visible to the eyes of all men without abandoning His essential nature; who has incarnated in the house of Vasudeva; who has made the entire would illumined with His limitless and excellent glory; and who has satisfied the entire universe with the impeccable glory of beauty. The idea is that I, who by Myself alone see all things directly as they are, look upon him, the last mentioned type of Yogi here, as superior to all other types mentioned earlier.

BHAGAVADGITA

English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda

Chapter 7

7.1 The Lord said -- Listen attentively to My words imparting knowledge to you, by which you will understand Me indubitably and fully --- Me, the object of the Yogic contemplation in which you are engaged with a mind so deeply bound to Me by virtue of overwhelming love that it would disintegrate instantaneously the moment it is out of touch with My essential nature, attributes, deeds and glories, and with your very self resting so completely on Me that it would break up when bereft of Me.

7.2 I will declare to you in full this knowledge having Me for its object, along with Vijnana or distinguishing knowledge. Vijnana is that knowledge of God in which His nature is distinguished form all things. I am distinguished from all things, animate and inanimate, as the only eing opposed to all that is evil and endowed with infinitely great manifestation of countless multiples of attributes of all kinds which are auspicious, unsurpassed and without limit. I will declare to you that knowledge which has My essence as its object. Why say much? I shall declare to you that knowledge knowing which nothing else remains to be known again in relation to Myself. Sri Krsna declares that this knowledge, which will now be taught, is difficult to attain:

7.3 ' Men' , i.e., those who are qualified for observing the commands of the Sastras --- among thousands of such men, only some one strives till the attainment of perfection. Among thousands who strive till the attainment of perfection, some one only, understanding Me, strives to attain success through Me (i.e., through My grace). Among thousands of those who might know Me, some one only knows Me in reality, as I am. In other words, there is no one who is capable of knowing Me as I am, i.e., as distinguished from all other entities, as implied in the expression Vijnana. Sri Krsna will declare later on: ' It is very hard to find such a great-souled person' (7.19), and ' ut no one knows Me' (7.26).

7.4 Know that Prakrti, the material cause of this universe, which consists of endless varieties of objects and means of enjoyment and places of enjoyment, is divided into eightfold substances --- earth, water, fire, air and ether, having smell, taste etc., as their attributes, and Manas along with kindred sense organs and the categories Mahat and ego-sense --- all belonging to Me.

7.5 This is My lower Prakrti. ut know My higher Prakrti which is different from this, i.e., whose nature is different from this inanimate Prakrti constituting the objects of enjoyment to animate beings. It is ' higher' , i.e., is more pre-eminent compared to the lower Prakrti which is constituted only of inanimate substances. This higher Nature of Mine is the individual self. Know this as My higher Prakrti through which the whole inanimate universe is sustained.

7.6 Know that all beings from rahma down to a tuft of grass, who have their origin in these two Prakrtis of Mine, are aggregated forms of the self and of inanimate matter. Irrespective of whether they are existing in a superior or inferior form, the selves and inanimate matter are mixed together in them. On account of their origination in My two Prakrtis, they are Mine. So, know that because the entire universe has its origination in these two Prakrtis which have their origination in Me, I am myself the origin and dissolution of the entire universe. For the same reason, I am its Lord (Sesin). It is proved on the basis of the Srutis and Smrtis that these two, Prakrti and Purusa (matter and the self), which form the aggregate of all animate and inanimate beings, have the Supreme Person as their cause. This is evident from Sruti and Smrti texts like the following: ' The Mahat resolves into Avyakta, Avyakta into Aksara, Aksara into Tamas, and Tamas becomes one with the Supreme Lord' (Su. U., 2); ' O sage, distinct from the form of Visnu, the Supreme Lord, the two forms, Prakrti and Purusa, arise' (V. P., 1.2.24); and ' What was described by Me as Prakrti in its dual form of the manifest and the unmanifest, and the Purusa do merge in the Supreme Self, and the Supreme Self is the support of all. He is the Supreme Lord named Visnu, exalted in the Vedas and Vedanta' (V. P., 6.4.38-39).

7.7 I am absolutely superior to all in two ways: 1) I am the cause of both the Prakrtis and I am also their controlling master (Sesin). This controllership over inanimate nature is exercised through the animate Prakrti (the Jivas) who form the inner controller (Sesin) of their bodies which are constituted of inanimate nature. 2) I am supreme to all in another sense also --- as the possessor of knowledge, power, strength etc., in an infinite degree. There is no entity other than Me with such attributes of an equal or superior nature. The aggregate of all the animate and inanimate things, whether in their causal state or in the state of effect, is strung on Me who abides as their Self, as a row of gems on a thread. They depend on Me. And it is proved that the universe of inanimate and animate beings exists as the body with rahman (i.e. the Supreme Person) as their Self as declared by the Antaryami-brahmana and other texts: ' He whose body is the earth' (r. U., 3.7-3), ' He whose body is the self' (r. U. Madh., 3.7.22), and ' He is the inner self of all beings, without evil, He is the Lord in the supreme heaven, He is the one Narayana' (Su. U., 7). Thus, as everything constitutes the body of the Supreme Person forming only a mode of His who is their Self, the Supreme Person alone exists, and all things (which we speak of as diversity) are only His modes. Therefore all terms used in common parlance for different things, denote Him only. Sri Krsna shows this by coordinating some important ones among these entities with Himself.

7.8 - 7.11 All these entities with their peculiar characteristic are born from Me alone. They depend on Me; inasmuch as they constitute My body, they exist in Me alone. Thus I alone exist while all of them are only My modes.

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7.12 Why should this be declared with particular illustrations? The reason is as follows: Whatever entities exist in the world partaking of the qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas in the forms of bodies, senses, objects of enjoyment and their causes --- know them all to have originated from Me alone, and they abide in Me alone, as they constitute My body. ' ut I am not in them.' That is, I do not depend for My existence on them at any time. In the case of other beings, though the body depends for its existence on the self, the body serves some purpose of the self in the matter of Its sustenance. To Me, however, there is no purpose at all of that kind served by them constituting My body. The meaning is that they merely serve the purpose of My sport.

7.13 Now, in this way, the whole universe, consisting of animate and inanimate entities belonging to Me, evolves from time to time from Me only, is absorbed in Me, and abides in Me alone. It constitutes My body and has Me for its self. Whether in the causal state or in the state of effect, it is I who have all these entities as My modes, because all entities form My body. Thus, in regard to all these modes, I am superior to them, as I am their cause, principal, and as I possess a complex of countless auspicious attributes like knowledge, strength etc. In every way I remain as the highest being. There exists none higher than Myself. Such being the case, I am superior to these entities composed of the qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas --- superior to them by My extraordinary attributes and by having these various modes for My enjoyment. I am the highest and immutable, i.e., I form a unity in Myself. This world constituted of gods, men, animals and immovables, and deluded by the three Gunas of Prakrti and its evolutes are inferior and transient. The forms of bodies, senses and objects of enjoyment comprising the world are there in accordance with their past Karmas. No one in the world knows Me. How is it possible that all experiencing beings think as enjoyable objects which are inferior, constituted of the Gunas and are transient, while You exist --- You who are of the nature of unbounded and abundant bliss, who has an eternal unchanging form and

who is the source of the enjoyableness of even the objects of the world? Sri Krsna replies:

7.14 (a) This Maya of Mine consists of the three Gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. ecause it is created by Me, the Divine, for purpose of sport, it is divine in its power and therefore difficult to overcome. The word Maya is used for the effects of the three Gunas, because it has got the power of generating wonderful effects as in the case of the magic of Asuras and Raksasas. See the passages: ' Then the excellent discus, the flaming Sudarsana, was despatched by the Lord to defend the boy. The thousand Mayas or wonderfully created weapons of the evil-designed Sambara were foiled one after another, by that quickly moving discus, for protecting the body of the boy' (V. P., 1.19. 19-20). Here the term Maya does not signify the sense of ' false' . Even with regard to magicians, when the term, Mayavin (one who possesses Maya) is used, there is origination of real impressions with the aid of certain incantations, herbs etc., though the objects created are illusory things. Accordingly the term Maya denotes the incantations, herbs etc., which have got the power of creating real impressions. Inasmuch as the sense of the term should be invariable, following the usage in all cases, the term Maya can be applied to the illusory objects, only in a secondary sense, while its primary sense in regard to the real impressions generated in the mind. It is just like in the statement ' The cots cry.' The Maya of the Lord, which is absolutely real and which consists of the Gunas, is alone taught in the texts like, ' Know then Maya to be the Prakrti and the possessor of the Maya to be the great Lord' (Sve. U., 4.10). It not only obscures the essential nature of the Lord but also creates the condition of the mind that sees its objects as enjoyable. Therefore, the entire universe, deluded by the Lord' s Maya, does not know the Lord who is of the nature of boundless beatitude. (On the other hand they feel objects set forth by Maya as enjoyable). Sri Krsna teaches the way of deliverance from Maya: (b) ut those who take refuge in Me alone --- Me whose resolves are always true, who has supreme compassion, and who is the refuge of all beings without exception and without consideration of their particular status --- such persons shall pass beyond this Maya of Mine consisting of the three Gunas. The meaning is that they worship Me alone, renouncing the Maya.

Why, then do all not take recourse to refuge in the Lord which is conducive to the worship of the Lord?

7.15 ' Evil-doers' , those who commit evil deeds, do not resort to Me. They are of four types, according to the degree of their evil deeds: (i) the foolish, (ii) the lowest of men, (iii) those persons deprived of knowledge by Maya, and (iv) those given to demoniac nature. ' The foolish' are those who have misconceived knowledge. True knowledge consists in understanding that the self is dependent on the Lord and exists for Him. ut ' the foolish' think they are independent and also that all enjoyable things of the world are their own and for their enjoyment. ' The lowest of men' are those who are incapable of turning towards Me, even though My essential nature is known to them generally. ' Persons who are deprived of knowledge by Maya' are those who, though possessing knowledge about Me and My manifestations, are moved by deceitful reasonings to contend that such knowledge is inconsistent and impossible. ' Those of demoniac nature' are those who have positive knowledge about Myself and My manifestation but hate Me. The intensity of sinfulness in these types in the order in which they are successively placed.

7.16 ' Men of good deeds,' i.e., those who have meritorious Karmas to their credit, and who resort to Me and worship Me alone --- they too are divided into four types according to the degrees of their good deeds, each subsequent type being better than the preceding, because of the greatness of their good deeds and gradation in respect of their knowledge. (i) The ' distressed' is one who has lost his position in life and his wealth, and who wishes to regain them (ii) He who ' aspires for wealth' is one who desires for wealth which he has not till then attained. etween them the difference is very little, as both of them seek wealth. (iii) He ' who seeks after knowledge' is one who wishes to realise the real nature of the self (in Its pure state) as an entity different from the Prakrti. He is called ' one who seeks to secure knowledge,' because knowledge alone is the essential nature of the self. (iv) And the ' man of knowledge' is he who knows that, it is the essential nature of the self to find happiness only as the Sesa (subsidiary or liege) of the Lord, as taught in the text beginning with, ' ut know that which is other than this (lower nature) to be the higher Prakrti' (7.5).

Without stopping with the knowledge of the self as different from the Prakrti, he desires to attain the Lord. He thinks that the Lord alone is the highest aim to reach.

7.17 Of these four, ' the man of knowledge' is the foremost. Why? ecause of being ever with Me in Yoga and devoted to the One only. To the man of knowledge the attainment of Myself being the only end in view, he is ever with Me. As for the others, they contemplate on Me only until the fulfilment of their desires. ut to the man of knowledge, there is single-minded devotion to Me only. Unlike him, the others, want only the objects of their desire and they are devoted to Me only as a means for gaining them. Hence he, the man of knowledge, alone is the foremost. Further I am very dear to the man of knowledge. Here the term ' artha' in relation to the expression ' athyartham' denotes ' what cannot be expressed adequately.' That is, even I, the omniscient and omnipotent, is unable to express how much I am dear to the Jnanin, since there is no such limit as ' this much' for this love. Such is the meaning. As in the case of Prahlada, the foremost among men of knowledge, it is said: ' ut he with his thoughts firmly fixed on Krsna while being bitten by the great serpents, felt no pain from the wounds, being immersed in rapturous recollections of Him' (V. P., 1.17.39). I reciprocate this love infinitely.

7.18 ecause they worship Me alone, all these are generous i.e., benefactors. For, those who receive from Me anything, however small they are, I consider them as contributing everything to Me (and thus as benefactors). ut I deem the man of knowledge to be My very self. I consider Myself as depending on him for My support. Why is it so? ecause this person considers Me to be the highest and finds it impossible to support himself without Me; I also find it impossible to be without him. Thus, verily, he is My self. The attainment of this state of mind requires innumerable auspicious births. It is attained after gaining the knowledge of the real nature of the self and the self feels that Its happiness consists in being a dependant (Sesa) of Myself.

7.19 Further after passing through innumerable auspicious births, one gets the knowledge: ' I find my sole joy as a Sesa of Vasudeva. I find my essence,

existence and activities to be dependent on Him. He is superior over all others on account of His innumerable auspicious attributes.' Consequent to this knowledge he resorts to Me, i.e., meditates on Me, realising, ' Vasudeva alone is my highest end and also the means for attaining it, and whatever other desire remains in the mind, He alone is all that too for me' . Such a great-souled person, i.e., great-minded man is hard to find. It is very hard to find such persons in this world. This is the only meaning of the statement that ' Vasudeva is all,' because of the topic having been begun with the statements: ' For I am very dear to the man of knowledge' (7.17) and ' For he, integrated, is devoted to Me alone as the highest end' (7.18). It is so, also because that Jnanin whose traits are given here, possesses the same qualities as the man of knowledge described earlier. For, it has been said that the two Prakrtis, the animate and the inanimate, have their sole essence in being the Sesa (dependants) of the Supreme Person in the verses beginning with ' Earth, water' (7.4) and ending with, ' Ego-sense, thus My Prakrti is divided eightfold. This is my lower (Prakrti). ut know that which is other than this (lower nature) and forms the life-principle to be the higher Prakrti' (7.4-5). Then take the beginning from ' I am the origin and dissolution of the whole universe. There is nothing higher than Myself, O Arjuna' (7.6-7), and ending with, ' Know that all the states of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are from Me alone. ut I am not in them. They are in Me' (7.12). It has been declared in these texts that the two Prakrtis, both in their states of cause and effect, depend upon Him for their essence, existence and activities and that the Supreme Person is superior to everything in all respects. Therefore the knower of this truth alone is here spoken of as a man of knowledge or as one knowing ' All this is Vasudeva.' [The purpose of this explanation is to eliminate any pure monistic slant to this passage.] Sri Krsna now explains the rarity of finding such a person of knowledge.

7.20 All men of this world are ' controlled' , i.e., constantly accompanied by their own nature consisting in the Vasanas (subtle impressions) resulting from relation with the objects formed of the Gunas. Their knowledge about My essential nature is robbed by various Karmas, i.e., by objects of desire corresponding to their Vasanas (subtle impressions) born of their Karmas and

constituted of Gunas. In order to fulfil these various kinds of desires they take refuge in, i.e., seek and worship, other divinities who are regarded as different from Me, such as Indra and others, observing various disciplines, i.e., practising rituals which are specially meant to propitiate only these divinities.

7.21 These divinities too constitute My body as taught in the Sruti text like: ' He who, dwelling in the sun, whom the sun does not know, whose body is the sun' (r. U., 3.7.9). Whichever devotee seeks to worship with faith whatever form of Mine, such as the Indra, although not knowing these divinities to be My forms, I consider his faith as being directed to My bodies or manifestations, and make his faith steadfast, i.e., make it free from obstacles.

7.22 He, endowed with that faith without obstacles, performs the worship of Indra and other divinities. Thence, i.e., from the worship of Indra and other divinities, who constitute My body, he attains the objects of his desire, which are in reality granted by Me alone. Although he does not know at the time of worship that divinities like Indra, who are his objects of worship, are My body only, and that worship of them is My worship, still, inasmuch as this worship is, in reality, My worship, he attains his objects of desire granted by Me alone.

7.23 The men of ' small understanding' means those whose understanding is poor, who worship only Indra and other divinities. The fruit of their worship is small and finite. Why? The worshippers of divinities like Indra go to the divinities. And Indra and other divinities possess limited joy and live only for a limited time. So if they attain equality of enjoyment with them, they also fall down along with them in due course; but My devotees, knowing that their acts are of the nature of My worship, renouncing attachment for finite, fruits, reach Me, having for their purpose the pleasing of Me alone. That is, they never more return to Samsara. For Sri Krsna teaches later on: ' ut on reaching Me there is no rebirth, O Arjuna' (8.16). Now Sri Krsna declares: ' ut these others (i.e., who worship Indra etc.) regard as insignificant even My incarnations among men and other beings in order to make Myself easy for all to resort to.'

7.24 Ignorant people do not know My higher nature, immutable and unsurpassed. They do not know that it is I, who is worshipped through all rites, who is the Lord of all, and whose nature is beyond speech and mind, that has incarnated as the son of Vasudeva, without abandoning My divine nature, out of My supreme compassion and parental love for those who resort to Me and in order that I may be the refuge of all. They consider Me as only a worldly prince who was not manifest before and who has now become manifest by Karma and has secured a special form. Therefore, they do not resort to Me, nor do they worship Me. Why is He not manifest (to them)? Sri Krsna says:

7.25 Concealed by the Maya called Yogamaya, I am associated with a human form and other generic structures which are special to individual selves. ecause of this I am not manifest to all. The foolish, by seeing in Me merely the human or the other generic structures, do not know that My powers are greater than those of Vayu and Indra, that My lustre is more brilliant than that of sun and fire, that though visible to all, I am unborn, immutable, the cause of all the worlds, the Lord of all, and that I have assumed a human form, so that all who want can take refuge in Me.

7.26 I know all being that have passed away, those that live now and those that will hereafter. ut no one knows Me. Among the beings existing in the three-fold divisions of time whom I look after, no one understands Me as of the nature described and as Vasudeva incarnated to be a refuge for all. So no one resorts to Me. Therefore, the one who knows Me really (Jnanin) is extremely difficult to be found. Such is the meaning. So also:

7.27 As soon as beings are born they are deluded. This delusion springs from sense experiences described as pairs of opposites like heat and cold. Such reactions spring from desire and hate. The purport is this: Desire and hatred for the pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain, which are constituted of Gunas, have their origin in the Jivas from the past experiences they had in their previous births. The subtle impressions or Vasanas of these previous experiences manifest again as instinctive desire and hatred towards similar objects in every succeeding birth of the Jivas. The delusive force of these

impressions make them deluded from the very beginning. It becomes their nature to have love or hatred for such objects, in place of having happiness and misery at union with or separation from Me. The Jnanin, however, feels happiness when he is in union with Me and misery when separated from Me. No other being is born with such a nature as found in the Jnanin.

7.28 However, there are some whose sins, accruing from beginningless time, which cause desire or hatred to the pairs of opposites and annual the tendency towards Me, have come to an end, i.e., have become weakened, through the accumulation of good actions in numerous births, They resort to Me, devoid of delusion produced by the Gunas, and worship Me alone in proportion to the excellence of their Karmas previously described. In order to attain deliverance form old age and death and for acquiring the supreme consummation of reaching Me, they remain steadfast in their vows. Sri Krsna enumerates what special things are to be known and what ought to be attained by these three classes of votaries of God:

7.29 Those who take refuge in Me and strive for deliverance from old age and death, i.e., for the vision of the real nature of the self as distinct from the Prakrti, they know brahman (the pure individual self). They also know all about the individual self, and the whole of Karma. [This attainment is known as Kaivalya, which means the aloofness of the self in absorption in Its own bliss.]

7.30 Here, other qualified persons distinct from those already mentioned (i.e., those who desire Kaivalya) are to be understood, because of the mention again of the term ' those'   (ye). Even though the declaration --- those seekers of fortune who know Me as being connected with the higher material entities' (Adhibhuta) and ' with that which is higher to divinities'   (Adhidaiva) i.e., the self in Its lordship --- resmebles a repetition, it is really an injunction on account of the meaning not being known otherwise. The statement of knowing Me as being connected with the sacrifice is also enjoined as an injunction for all the three types of differently qualified aspirants (those who aspire for Kaivalya, wealth and liberation) without any difference, because of the nature of the

subject matter, that being sacrificial. None of the three types of aspirants can give up the performance of the great sacrifices and other rituals in the form of periodical and occasional rituals. They know Me at the hour of death in a way corresponding with their objectivies. ecause of the term ca (too) in ' they too,' those who have been mentioned before as ' striving for release from old age and death'   are also to be understood along with the others as knowing Me at the hour of death. y this, even the Jnanin knows Me as being connected with the sacrifice on account of the nature of the meaning of the subject treated (i.e., sacrifice). They also know Me even at the hour of death in a way corresponding with their objective. The purport is that, besides the others mentioned earlier like the knower of the Self, those others who are now described as knowing Him with Adhibhuta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajna are to be included among those who will know Him at the time of death.

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BHAGAVADGITA
English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda
Chapter 8

8.1-- 8.2 Arjuna said -- What are that brahman, Adhyatma and Karma which have been mentioned as what should be known by those who aspire for release from old age and death while they take refuge with the Lord? What are Adhibuta and Adhidaiva, which should be known by the aspirants for wealth? Who is Adhiyajna that is to be known by the three groups as their dying hour. In what manner are You to be known by these three groups who are self-controlled?

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8.3 The Lord said -- That which is the Supreme Imperishable (Aksara) has been named ' that brahman' The Aksara is that which cannot be destroyed and forms the totality of all individual selves. The Srutis say to this effect: ' The Avyakta is dissolved into the Aksara, the Aksara is dissolved into Tamas' (Su. U., 2). The supreme Aksara is the essential form of the self, separated from Prakrti. One' s own material nature (the body) is spoken of as Adhyatma or that which dwells with the self. This material nature (Svabhava) is Prakrti. It does not form the self but attaches itself to the self in the form of subtle elements, impressions etc. This has been taught in the Vidya of Five Fires (Cha. U., 5). oth these (the Aksara and the Adhyatma) should be known by the aspirants for liberation (Kaivalya) --- the former as what should be attained and the latter as what should be relinquished. Karma is that force which produces the origination of mundane beings. 'beings' here means beings such as the human beings. The creative force which produces their origination is contact with

woman. It has been described in the Sruti passage thus: ' The waters sacrificed in the fifth oblations become those who are named Purusas' (Cha. U., 5.3.3). That creative force is called Karma. All the acts associated with that should be considered by aspirants after release as calling for abstention. This abstention will also be inculcated immediately in the text, ' Desiring which they practise the vow of continence' (8.11).

8.4 The perishable existences which have been declared as fit to be known by the seekers of wealth, power etc., form the Adhibhuta. They are superior material entities that remain in ether or space and other elements. They are the evolutes of material elements and are perishable in their nature. They are also of the nature of sound, touch etc., supported by their basic subtle elements but different from, and finer than, ordinary sound etc., and are of many kinds. Sound, touch, form, taste and smell on this kind, which are manifold and rooted in their several bases, are to be gained by the seekers after prosperity and should be contemplated upon by them. Adhidaivata connotes Purusa. The Purusa is superior to divinities like Indra, Prajapati and others, and is the experiencer of sound etc., which are different from, and superior to, the multitude of enjoyments of Indra, Prajapati etc. The condition of being such an enjoyer is to be contemplated upon by the seekers after prosperity, as the end to be attained. I alone am connoted by the term Adhiyajna (sacrifice). Adhiyajna denotes one who is propitiated in sacrifices. Indra and others, to whom sacrifices are made, form My body. I dwell as their Self and I alone am the object of worship by sacrifice. In this manner the three groups of qualified devotees should contemplate at the time of the practice of periodical and occasional rituals like the great sacrificies. This is also common to all the three groups of devotees.

8.5 He who, at the last moment, while leaving the body, departs remembering Me alone, attains My being; he attains My condition. In whatever way he meditates on Me, he attains that very form, in the same manner as the royal sage harata attained the form of the deer remembered by him at death. Such is the meaning. Sri Krsna further elucidates that it is the nature of one' s last thought that leads to the attainment of a similar form by the meditator:

8.6 ' At the end,' at the time of death, remembering whatsoever thought one abandones the body, to that alone one goes after death. The final thought arises only with reference to objects pervioulsy ruminated upon in one' s thought. As the final thought results only about an object previously contemplated upon,

8.7 Therefore, at all times, until your departure, remember Me, day after day. Engage yourself in actions appropriate to your station and stage in life, which would make you remember Me. These actions are prescribed by the Srutis and Smrtis and comprise the periodical and occasional rites. Thus, by this means, with your mind and intellect set on Me, you will remember Me at the time of death and thus attain to Me in the manner desired by you. There is no doubt about this. Thus, having laid down the common principle that the attainment of one' s end is dependent on one' s last thought, Sri Krsna proceeds to describe different modes of contemplation (Upasana) to be practised by the three groups of devotees for acquiring their objectives. Of these, he first speaks about the modes of contemplation to be adopted by the seekers of enjoyments and power and the type of the last thought consistent with their contemplation.

8.8 Contemplating on Me, the Supreme Divine Person, in the way to be specified further, at the last moment, with a mind trained by constant practice and Yoga, and not moving towards anything else, one reaches Me alone, i.e., attains a form similar to that of Mine, by virtue of the attributes of enjoyment and the prosperity contemplated upon, like the royal sage harata who acquired the form of a deer on account of contemplating on it at the last moment. Abhyasa is the training of the mind to be often in touch with the object of meditation at all times without obstruction to the performance of the prescribed periodical and occasional rituals. Yoga is the meditation practised day by day at the time of Yoga practice in the manner prescribed.

8.9 - 8.10 He who focusses his life-breath between the eyebrows at the time of death with a mind rendered unswerving through its purification achieved by the

strength of Yoga conjoined with hakti practised day after day; and he who contemplates on the ' Kavi' i.e., the Omniscient, the ' Primeval' , i.e., who existed always, ' the Ruler,' i.e., who governs the universe, ' who is subtler than the subtle,' i.e., who is subtler than the individual self, ' who is the Dhata' of all, i.e., the creator of all, ' whose nature is inconceivable,' i.e., whose nature is other than everything else, ' who is sun-coloured and beyond darkness,' i.e., who possesses a divine form peculiar to Himself --- he who concentrates on Him, the Divine Person described above, between the eyebrows, attains Him alone. He attains His state and comes to have power and glory similar to His. Such is the meaning. Then He describes the mode of meditation to be adopted by the seeker of Kaivalya or the Jijnasu (i.e., of one who seeks to know his own self or Atman in contrast to one whose object is God-realisation).

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8.11 I shall show you briefly that goal which the knowers of the Veda call ' the imperishable,' i.e., as endowed with attributes like non-grossness etc., --- that imperishable which ' the ascetics freed from passion enter' ; that imperishable ' desiring to attain which men practise continence' . What is attained by the mind as its goal is called ' pada' . I shall tell you briefly My essential nature which is beyond all description and which is explained in the whole of Vedanta and

which is to be meditated upon. Such is the meaning.

8.12 - 8.13 Subduing all the senses like ear etc., which constitute the ' doorways' for sense impressions, i.e., withdrawing them from their natural functions; holding the mind in Me, the imperishable ' seated within the lotus of the heart' ; practising ' steady abstraction of mind (Dharana) which is called concentration or Yoga,' i.e., abiding in Me alone in a steady manner; uttering the sacred ' syllable Om,' the brahman which connotes Me; remembering Me, who am expressed by the syllable Om; and fixing his ' life-breath within the head' --- whosoever abandons the body and departs in this way reaches the highest state. He reaches the pure self freed from Prakrti, which is akin to My form. From that state there is no return. Such is the meaning. Later on Sri Krsna will elucidate: ' They describe that as the highest goal of the Atman, which is not destroyed when all things are destroyed, which is unmanifest and imperishable' (8.20--21). Thus, the modes of contemplation on the Lord by the aspirants after prosperity and Kaivalya (Atmann-consciousness) have been taught according to the goal they lead to. Now, Sri Krsna teaches the way of meditation on the Lord by the Jnanin and the mode of attainment by him.

8.12 - 8.13 Subduing all the senses like ear etc., which constitute the ' doorways' for sense impressions, i.e., withdrawing them from their natural functions; holding the mind in Me, the imperishable ' seated within the lotus of the heart' ; practising ' steady abstraction of mind (Dharana) which is called concentration or Yoga,' i.e., abiding in Me alone in a steady manner; uttering the sacred ' syllable Om,' the brahman which connotes Me; remembering Me, who am expressed by the syllable Om; and fixing his ' life-breath within the head' --- whosoever abandons the body and departs in this way reaches the highest state. He reaches the pure self freed from Prakrti, which is akin to My form. From that state there is no return. Such is the meaning. Later on Sri Krsna will elucidate: ' They describe that as the highest goal of the Atman, which is not destroyed when all things are destroyed, which is unmanifest and imperishable' (8.20--21). Thus, the modes of contemplation on the Lord by the aspirants after prosperity and Kaivalya (Atmann-consciousness) have been taught according to the goal they lead to. Now, Sri Krsna teaches the way of

meditation on the Lord by the Jnanin and the mode of attainment by him.

8.14 I am easy to access to that Yogin who is ' ever integrated with Me,' i.e., who wants constant contact with Me, who recollects Me; and whose mind is not in ' anything else without break' (Nityasah), i.e., at the time of meditation and also during all other times (Satatam). As I am exceedingly dear to him, he is unable to sustain himself without remembering Me and cherishing My memory which is incomparably dear to him. I am the only object he wants to attain and not any mode of My being like sovereignty, etc. I Myself grant him the capacity to attain full maturity in devotional practice necessary for attaining Me --- namely, the annulment of all obstacles and the establishment of the state of mind that renders Me exceedingly dear to oneself. The Sruti also says: ' He whom this (Self) chooses, by him He can be obtained' (Mun. U., 3.2.3 and Ka. U., 2.22). And Sri Krsna Himself will teach: To

8.15 Having attained Me, they are not subject to rebirth, which leads to a condition that is transient and an abode of sorrow. These great souls, i.e., men of noble minds, worship and attains Me as the sorrow object of attainment; because they possess knowledge of My essential nature as it really is; they are unable to maintain or sustain themselves without Me, as I am exceedingly dear to them. With their minds deeply attached to Me and completely dependent on Me, they reach Me as the supreme goal. Sri Krsna next teaches the reason for the return to Samsara of those aspirants for Aisvarya (prosperity) and for the non-return to Samsara of those who have reached the Lord:

8.16 All the worlds, from the realm of rahma included in the rahmanda (cosmic sphere), are spheres in which experiences conferring Aisvarya (prosperity and power) can be obtained. ut they are destructible and those who attain them are subject to return. Therefore destruction, i.e., return is unavoidable for the aspirants for Aisvarya, as the regions where it is attained perish. On the contrary there is no rebirth to those who attain Me, the Omniscient, who has true resolves, whose sport is creation, sustentation and dissolution of the entire universe, who is supremely compassionate and who is always of the

same form. For these reasons there is no destruction in the case of those who attain Me. He now elucidates the time-period settled by the Supreme Person' s will in regard to the evolution and dissolution of the worlds upto the cosmic sphere of rahma and of those who are within them.

8.17 These men who know the order of the day and night as established by My will in regard to all beings, beginning with man and ending with rahma --- they understand that what forms rahma' s day is a unit comprising in it a thousand periods of four Yugas (Catur-yugas) and anight is a unit of equal duration.

8.18 Thus, at the dawn of a day of rahma, the manifest entities existing in the three worlds, possessing body, senses, objects, and places of enjoyment appear from the non-manifest (Avyakta), which is the condition of rahma' s body in that state, and at the beginning of the night they are dissolved into the condition of the unevolved (Avyakta) which forms the body of rahma then.

8.19 The same multitude of beings, controlled by Karma, evolves again and again, undergoing dissolution at the coming of night. Again at the coming of the day it comes forth. Similarly, at the end of the life span of rahma which consists of a hundred years of three hundred and sixty days each, each rahma-day being a thousand Caturyugas, all the worlds including that of rahma and rahma himself dissolve into Me in accordance with the order thus described in the Srutis: ' The earth is dissolved into the waters, the waters are dissolved into light' etc., (Su. U., 2). The process of involution ends, after passing through all the other stages of dissolution, with the Avyakta, Akasa and Tamas. Therefore, for every other entity except Myself, origination and annihilation are unavoidable. So for those who seek Aisvarya (prosperity and power) birth and dissolution according to the above mentioned time arrangement are unavoidable. ut in the case of those who attain to Me, there is no return again to Samsara. [The immense duration of time, according to ancient thinkers, is as follows: Catur-yuga, or a unit of the four yugas of Krta, Treta, Dvapara and Kali, has a cumulative duration of 4,320,000 human years. A thousand such periods constitute a day time of rahma and a similar period

his night. Periodic creation and dissolution of the universe take place in these two periods respectively. One year of rahma consists of 360 such diurnal period. A rahma has a life-span of 100 such years --- i.e., 311, 040, 000,000,000 human years. At the end of it, there is a Mahapralaya, and a new rahma comes into being. Time thus goes on endlessly]. Now Sri Krsna teaches that there is no return to Samsara even for those who have attained Kaivalya (isolation of the self).

8.20 - 8.21 Superior, as an object of human end, to this unmanifest (Avyakta), which is inanimate Prakrti, there is another state of being, of a kind different from this, but also called Avyakta. It has only knowledge-form and is also unmanifest. It is the self, Atman. It is unmanifest because It cannot be apprehended by any means of knowledge (Pramanas). The meaning is that Its nature is unique and that It can be known only to Itself. That is, It can be understood only vaguely in the ordinary ways of knowing. It is eternal, namely, ever-enduring, because It is not subject to origination and annihilation. In texts like ' For those who meditate on the imperishable, undefinable, the unmanifest' (12.3) and ' The imperishable is called the unchanging' (15.16) --- that being the self. It has been called the unmanifest (Avyakta) and imperishable (Aksara); when all material elements like ether, etc., with their causes and effects are annihilated, the self is not annihilated in spite of It being found alone with all the elements. [The elements are what constitute the bodies of beings.] The knowers of the Vedas declare It as the highest end. The meaning is that the imperishable entity which has been denoted by the term ' highest goal' in the passage, ' Whosoever abandons the body and departs (in the manner described) reaches the highest state (Dhama)' (8.13), is the self (Atman) abiding in Its essential nature free from the contact with the Prakrti. This self, which abides thus in Its essential nature, by attaining which It does not return, --- this is My ' highest abode,' i.e., is the highest object of My control. The inanimate Prakrti is one object of My control. The animate Prakrti associated with this inanimate Prakrti is the second object of My control. The pristine nature of the freed self, free from contact with inanimate matter, is the highest object of My rule. Such is the meaning. This state is also one of non-return to Samsara. Or the term ' dhama' may signify ' luminosity' . And luminosity

connotes knowledge. The essential nature of the freed self is boundless knowledge, or supreme light, which stands in contrast to the shrunken knowledge of the self, when involved in Prakrti. [The description given above is that of Kaivalya, the state of self-luminous existence as the pure self]. Sri Krsna now teaches that the object of attainment for the Jnanin, is totally different from this:

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knowledge, or supreme light, which stands in contrast to the shrunken knowledge of the self, when involved in Prakrti. [The description given above is that of Kaivalya, the state of self-luminous existence as the pure self]. Sri Krsna now teaches that the object of attainment for the Jnanin, is totally different from this:

8.22 That Supreme Person has been declared in such texts as ' There is nothing higher than Myself, O Arjuna. All this is strung on Me, as rows of gems are on a thread' (7.7), and ' Who am beyond them and immutable' (7.13) --- He is the Supreme Person in whom all beings abide and by whom all this is pervaded. He is to be attained by undivided devotion as described in ' Whose mind is not in anything else' (8.14). Now, Sri Krsna teaches the ' path of light,' described in the Srutis which is common to the knowers of the true nature of the self and to the persons who are devoted to the Supreme Person. The nature of this path is qualified as one of ' non-return to Samsara.' In the case of a person journeying through the ' path of light,' as described in the text of the worship of Five Fires is as follows: ' So those who know It (i.e., the eternal nature of the individual self) thus, as taught in the Vidya of the Five Fires, and those too who worhip in the forest with faith and Tapas go to the deity ruling over the rays of light, and from there to the deity of the day' (Cha. U., 5.10.1). The attainment of the Supreme rahman and the non-return to birth are declared with reference to those who go by the path of light, etc., by the teaching that ' He the Supreme eing leads them to rahman ... Those who reach by this path do not return to the (wordly) life of man' (Cha. U., 4.15.5). This declaration of the goal in the text, ' Those who know it thus etc.,' is not with reference to the attainment of the Atman which constitutes ony the limb of the science of rahman as taught in the beginning of Prajapati' s teaching. For there will then arise purposelessness for the separate teaching of the same in regard to the principal science of the Supreme in the text. ' Those who are in the forest worship by means of faith and austerity etc.,' (Cha. U., 5.10.1). It is taught in the Vidya (meditation) of Five Fires: ' Thus, indeed, in the fifth oblation the waters become Purusa' (Cha. U., 5.9.1) and ' Those with a balance of good Karmas ... and those with a balance of bad Karmas' (Ibid., 5.10.7). What is to be understood here is that the state of existence as men and other

beings, which has its origin in good and evil Karmas, refer to the ' waters' which alone are mixed with other elements (i.e., to the body-mind); as for the self, there is only contact with them and not identification. Thus, is declared the difference between intelligent self and inanimate matter. Then, by the texts, ' Those who know this' (Ibid., 5.10.1), ' Those who go to the rays of light' (Ibid.), and ' They who proceed by it return not to the human condition here,' it is instructed that those who know this concerning the sentient and inanimate entities --- the one to be attained and the other to be rejected ----, they jourey along the path described by the terms ' beginning with light and do not return to Samsara' . On account of the passage, ' He leads them to the rahman' (Ibid., 4.15.5), which holds that the rahman is attained by both the knower of real nature of the self and the devotees of the Supreme Person and also because of the axiom of ' results according to efforts' (Tat-kratu-nyaya), the entity self, separated from the inanimate matter, should be constantly meditated upon as having its sole joy in absolute subservience to the Supreme rahman who is Its self. The self' s nature of finding only joy consists in absolute subservience to the Surpeme Person. This is proved from the Srutis like ' He who dwells within the self ... whose body is the self' (Sa. ra., 14.6.5.5.30).

8.23 - 8.24 Here, the term ' time' denotes a path, having many deities beginning with day and ending with year. The deities preside over divisions of time. The meaning is --- I declare to you the path departing in which Yogins do not return and also the path departing in which the doers of good actions return. y the clause, ' Light in the form of fire, the day, bright fortnight, six months of the northern course,' year also is denoted.

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8.25 This denotes the world of the manes etc., described by the term ' starting with smoke.' Here the term Yogin connotes one associated with good actions.

8.26 The bright path is characterised by the terms ' starting with light.' The dark path is characterised by the ' terms starting with smoke.' y the bright path a man goes to the plane of no-return, but he who goes by the dark path returns again. In the Sruti both the bright and dark paths are said to be eternal in relation to Jnanis and doers of good actions of many kinds. This is corroborated in the text: ' Those who know this and those who worship with faith do Tapas in the forest etc., they go to the light' (Cha. U., 5.10.1), and ' ut those who in the village perform Vedic and secular acts of a meritorious nature and the giving of alms --- they pass to the smoke' (ibid., 5.10.3).

8.27 Having known these two paths, no Yogin is deluded. On the contrary, he goes by the path of gods, his own path. Therefore, be integrated every day with Yoga called meditation on the path described by the terms starting with light. Next Sri Krsna speaks of the fruit of knowing the import of the Sastras, as taught in the two chapters 7 and 8.

8.28 Whatever fruit is said to accrue for meritorious actions in the form of the regular study of the Vedas Rg, Yajus, Saman and Atharvan as also for the performance of sacrifices, austerities, gifts --- all these does not transcend on knowing this, namely the greatness of the Lord as taught in the two chapters (7 and 8). y immense joy arising from the knowledge of this, he regards all these results as negligible as straw. e being a Yogin, viz., a Jnanin, he reaches the supreme, primal abode which is without beginning and is attainable by such a Jnanin.

BHAGAVADGITA

English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda

Chapter 9

9.1 The Lord said -- I will declare to you, who does not cavil, this most mysterious knowledge called Upasana, which is of the nature of hakti, together with special knowledge, namely, the distinguishing knowledge of how it differs from other meditations. The import is this: You have heard of My eminence, which is distinct in kind from all other forms of greatness and is unlimited in its modes. You must have been convinced that it can be so only and not otherwise. To you whose mind is thus prepared, I shall declare that knowledge by acquiring which, and making which your way of life, you will be emancipated from all evil that hinders you from attaining Me.

9.2 This is a ' royal science' , the king among sciences; ' the royal mystery' , the king among mysteries. Or royal science may also mean the science known and practised by kings. Indeed kings are those who have broad and profound minds. The meaning is that this is the science of great minds. This is a mystery, because the great-minded alone are skilled in keeping mysteries. This is ' supreme purifier' ; for it removes completely all blemishes opposed to the attainment of Myself. It is realised by ' direct perception' . Avagama' is that which is apprehended --- the subject of knowledge. It is that knowledge which has become direct perception, so that its object is directly apprehended. The import is that I, when worshipped in the spirit of hakti, become perceptible to the worshipper immediately. Even so, it is in ' accord with Dharma' or inseparable from Dharma. What is called Dharma is that which constitutes the means for the highest good. Though it is of the nature of supreme good, as it brings about the vision of Myself, yet it is also the means for completely attaining Me, which is the end unsurpassed and the final good. ecause of this, it is ' pleasurable' to practise; its adoption is a matter of supreme love. It is ' abiding' , imperishable. It does not perish even after leading to My attainment. That is, I give Myself up to one who performs this form of worship; even then it appears to Me that I have done nothing for him. Such is the meaning.

9.3 Some men who even after attaining the state fit for the practice of this Dharma which is called Upasana (worship) --- which is immensely dear inasmuch as it has for its goal Myself who am incomparably dear, and which is the means for the attainment of Myself forming the supreme good that does not perish --- may still ' lack faith' in it. Such persons who lack faith which requires eagerness for realization, will not attain Me but remain in the mortal pathway of Samsara. O how strange it is --- this hindrance caused by evil Karma! Such is the meaning. [It means, that to declare that one has faith in a spiritual doctrine and yet to take no steps to put it into practice, is pure hypocrisy.] Listen then to the inconceivable glory of Myself, who am the goal tobe attained:

9.4 This ' entire universe,' composed to sentient and non-sentient beings, is pervaded by Me, the inner controller, whose ' form is not manifest,' namely, whose essential nature is unmanifest. The meaning is that all this is pervaded by Me, the Principal (Sesi), so that I may sustain and rule this universe. This, the pervasion of all by the inner controller, who is invisible to the entire group of sentient and non-sentient beings, is taught in the following passage of the Antaryami-brahmana: ' He who dwells in the earth ... whom the earth ' does not know' (r. U., 3.7.3) and ' He who dwells in the self ... whom the self does not know etc.,' (r. U. Madh., 3.7.22). Therefore ' all beings abide in Me' ; all beings rest in Me who am their inner controller. In the same rahmana it is taught that their existence and control are dependent on Him, as they are subject to His control and as they constitute His body: ' He whose body is the earth ... who controls the earth from within' (r. U., 3.7.3) and ' He whose body is the self ... He who controls the self from within' (r. U. Madh., 3.7.22). So also His primacy over everything is taught. ' I am not in them,' namely, I do not ' depend' on them for My existence. There is no help derived from them for My existence.

9.5 And yet ' beings do not abide in Me,' as I do not support them as a jug or any kind of vessel supports the water contained in them. How then are they contained? y My will. ehold My divine Yoga power, namely, My wonderful divine modes, unique to Me alone and having no comparison elsewhere. What are these modes? ' I am the upholder of all beings and yet I am not in them ---

My will sustains all beings.' The meaning is I am the supporter of all beings, and yet I derive no help for Myself whatever from them. My will alone projects, sustains and controls all beings. He gives an illustration to show how all beings depend on His will for their being and acts:

9.6 The ' powerful air' remains and moves everywhere in the ether (Akasa) without any perceivable support. So it has necessarily got to be admitted that the powerful air is dependent on Me for its existence and is being upheld by Me alone. Even so know that all entities abide in Me, who am invisible to them, and that they are upheld by Me alone. The knowers of the Veda declare thus: ' The origin of clouds, the waters of the ocean remaining within bounds, the phases of the moon, the strong movements of the gale, the flash of lightning and the movements of the sun --- all these are marvellous manifestations of the power of Visnu.' The meaning is that they are all the marvellous miracles which are unique to Visnu. The Srutis and other texts also declare likewise: ' Verily, O Gargi, at the command of that Imperishable One, the sun and the moon stand apart' (r. U., 3.8.9, and ' Through the fear of Him the wind blows, through the fear of Him the sun rises, through the fear of Him Agni and Indra perform their duties' (Tai. U., 2.8.1). It has been declared that the existence and acts of all beings originate by the will of the Lord, who is independent of all others. Now Sri Krsna declares that the origin and dissolution of all entities also are due to His will only:

9.7 All the mobile and immobile entities enter into My Prakrti at the end of a cycle, namely at the end of rahma' s life in accordance with My will. This Prakrti, constituting My body, is designated by the term Tamas, as it cannot be differentiated into name and form. I again send forth the very same beings at the beginning of a cycle. Manu declares accordingly: ' This universe became Tamas ... by an act of will. He produced it out of His body' (Manu, 1.5.8). The Srutis also declare thus: ' He whose body is Avyakta' (Su. U., 7); ' The Avyakta merges into Aksara, the Aksara into Tamas' (Ibid., 2); and also ' There was Tamas; the intelligence was concealed by Tamas' (Tai. r., 1.8.9).

9.8 Operating My Prakrti, with its wonderfully variegated potency, I develop it eightfold and send forth this fourfold aggregate of beings, gods, animals, men and inanimate things, time after time. All these entities are helpless, being under the sway of My Prakrti comprising the three Gunas which can cause delusion. If this is so, it may be urged, inequalities of creation can be said to affect the Lord with cruelty, partiality etc. To this, the Lord answers:

9.9 ut actions like unequal creation do not bind Me. There can be no imputation of cruelty etc., to Me, because the previous actions (Karmas) of individual selves are the causes for the inequality of conditions like that of gods etc. I am untouched by the inequality. I sit, as it were, apart from it as one unconcerned. Accordingly, the author of the Vedanta-sutras says: ' Not inequality and cruelty, on account of (creation) being dependent, for so scripture declares' (r. Su., 2.1.34), and ' If it be said that there is no Karma on account of non-distinction, it is replied that it is not proper to say so, because it is beginningless ...' (Ibid., 2.1.35). [The idea is this: Creation has no first beginning. It is an eternal cyclic process of creation and dissolution of the universe. So the differentiation of Karma, Jiva and Isvara even before creation has to be accepted. Only in the creative cycle the differentiation becomes patent, and in the dissolved condition it remains latent.]

9.10 Therefore, My Prakrti, looked at by Me, through My will and under My supervision creates the world with its mobile and immobile beings in accordance with the Karma of individual selves. ecause of this, namely, My look at Prakrti in conformity with the Karma of individual selves, the world revolves. ehold in this wonderful phenomena the lordly power inherent to Me, the son of Vasudeva, such as My sovereignty, true resolve and being devoid of cruelty and similar blemishes! So declare the Srutis: ' The possessor of Maya projects this universe out of this. The other (i.e., individual self) is confined by Maya in the world. One should know the Maya to be the Prakrti. And the possessor of Maya to be the Mighty Lord' (Sve. U., 4.9.10).

9.11 ecause of their evil actions (Karmas), fools disregard Me --- the great Lord of all beings, the Omniscient, whose resolves are true, who is the sole

cause of the entire universe, and who has taken the human body out of great compassion so that I might become the refuge of all. They consider Me to be a man like themselves. The meaning is that they disregard Me, not knowing My higher nature which is an abode of compassion, generosity, condescension and parental solicitude. This nature of mine is the cause of My resorting to the human shape. ut without understanding this, the ignorant consider Me as of the same nature as others, because I have assumed the human form.

9.12 Men yielding to the deluding nature characteristics of Asuras and Raksas and not aware of My higher nature like compassion etc. When I am in a human form, are possessed of vain hopes, i.e, their hopes remain fruitless, and their knowledge also is vain, i.e., is fruitless. They are so because of their erroneous understanding which fails to know that all things, mobile and immobile, belong to Me. They are ignorant on account of their being devoid of knowledge of truth everywhere. Whatever they do regarding Me, the Lord of all, is done with an attitude that I am an ordinary mortal. So their efforts go in vain. All this springs from their partaking of the nature of Raksasas and Asuras.

9.13 Those who, through their multitude of good acts, have taken refuge in Me and have been thereby released from the bondage of evil --- they understand My divine nature. They are high-souled. Knowing Me to be the immutable source of all beings, namely, as the Lord whose name, acts and nature are beyond thought and speech, and who has descended in a human form out of supreme compassion to rescue the good, --- they worship Me with un unswerving mind. As I am extremely dear to them, without worshipping Me they are unable to find support for their mind, self and external organs. Thus they become devoted to Me as their sole object.

9.14 ecause of My being very dear to them, they are unable to find support for their souls even for a moment without ' singing My praises,' ' striving for My sake and bowing to Me in reverence.' Remembering My names connotative of My special attributes, they cry out My names --- Narayana, Krsna, Vasudeva etc., with horripilations in every part of their bodies and with their voices

tremulous and indistinct because of joy. They engage in activities for my sake, such as performing worship, and doing actions helpful to worship, lik building temples and cultivating temple gardens. They prostrate themselves on the earth like a stick, indifferent to dust, mud and the gravel, with all the eight members of their beings --- the Manas, uddhi, Ahankara, the two feet, two hands, and the head, which are bowed down under the influence of hakti. Aspiring for eternal communion with Me, desiring eternal union with Me, they worship Me, resolved to attain the state of servitude to Me for their entire being.

9.15 Other high-minded persons worship Me by singing My names, etc., already described; and they also perform the sacrifice called knowledge. They worship Me, who, by being ' characterised by diversity in various ways' in the form of the cosmos, is a multiform, namely, having all entities as modes (Prakaras) and also as One (the Prakari). The purport is this: The Lord Vasudeva alone, having the body comprising animate and inanimate entities in an extremely subtle form (in the state of Cosmic dissolution) incapable of distinctness by name and form, resolves by His unfailing true will power: ' May I become embodied in gross animate and inanimate entities, distinguished variously by name and form.' He alone then abides, with the variegated cosmos as His body, comprising gods, animals, men and immobile things. They worship Me by contemplating on Me thus. Therefore Sri Krsna declares: ' I, having the universe for My body, alone abide' .

9.16 I am the Kratu, namely, I am Jyotistoma and other Vedic sacrifices. I alone am the Great Sacrifice (the fivefold sacrifices). I am the Svadha, the libation offered to nourish the hosts of manes. I am the herb, namely, oblation. I am the Mantra. I alone am the clarified butter. This implies other illustrations also. I alone am the oblation of Soma etc. Such is the meaning. I am the fire such as Ahavaniya etc. I am the act of offering into fire.

9.17 Of the world consisting of mobile and immobile entities, I alone am the father, mother, creator and grandfather. Here the term Dhatr stands for one other than the parents who helps in the birth of a particular person. Whatever

is known from theVedas as purifying, I alone am that. I am the Pranava, which originates knowledge and forms the seed of the Vedas. I am the Veda comprising Rk, Saman and Yajus.

9.18 ' Gaith' means that which is reached. The meaning is that it is the place to be reached from everywhere. The ' supporter' is one who props. The ' ruler' is one who rules. The ' witness' is one who sees directly. The ' abode' is that where one dwells in as in a house etc. The ' refuge' is the intelligent being wh has to be sought, as he leads one to the attainment of desirable things and avoidance of evils. A ' friend' is one who wishes well. The ' base' is that place in which origin and dissolution takes place. I alone am that ' Nidhana' , that which is preserved. What comes into being and is dissolved is Myself. The imperishable seed is that exhaustless cause everywhere. I alone am that.

9.19 I send out ' heat' in the form of fire, the sun etc. I ' hold back' the rain during summer. Likewise, I pour out the rains during the rainy season. I am ' immortality as well as death' --- I am both these conditions through which the world lives and dies. Why say more? I am ' the being and the non-being.' eing is that which exists in the present time. Non-being is that which existed in the past and that which may exist in the future, but is not experienced now as existing. The meaning is that, I alone am existent, having all the entities for my modes, as all intelligent and inhert beings existing in all states, constitute My body. In this way, they (the wise) worship Me, contemplating, through the realisation of My essential unity, as the entire universe distinguished by names and forms and characterished by varied pluralities constituting My body. I alone exist; all the pluralities are only My modes. Thus, after depiciting the character of the noble-minded, whose enjoyment consists of only the experience of the Lord, and in order to bring into bolder relief their greatness, He describes the behaviour of ignorant men who covet the objects of desire.

9.20 The three Vedas consist of the Rk, Yajus and Saman. The followers of the three Vedas are called ' Trai-vidyah' , but they are not devoted to Vedanta (or Trayyanta). The great souls, who rely on Vedanta, know Me, as mentioned before, to be the only object to be known from all the Vedas. Considering Me

as the highest object of attainment, they worship Me through singing My names etc., caused by deep devotion to Me, and also through the sacrifice of knowledge. ut the followers of the three Vedas drink the Soma beverage, forming the remainder of sacrifices in honour of Indra and other divinities, as prescribed by the Vedas. They are thereby purified of evil that stand in the way of attainment of heaven. In these sacrifices, in which Indra etc., are regarded as divinties, they really worship Me in the forms of these divinities. They ' however'   do not know that I abide in them in that way, and so they pray for the way to heaven etc. After attaining the world of Indra, which is free from unhappiness, they enjoy everywhere the divine pleasures.

9.21 After enjoying the spacious world of heaven, they return to the world of mortals when the meritorious Karma forming the cause of that experience is exhausted. Thus, lacking in the knowledge established in the Vedanta and desiring only the attainment of heaven etc., they who follow the teaching of the three Vedas on sacrificial rites, come and go. After enjoying the trifling and transient pleasures of heaven, they return to Samsara again and again. ut the great souls meditating on Me, who am incomparably dear to them, attain boundless and unsurpassed bliss and do not return to Samsara. Sri Krsna desribes their distinguishing features:

9.22 There are Mahatmas who, excluding everything else and having no other purpose, meditate on Me as their only purpose, because without Me they are unable to sustain themselves. They think of Me and worship Me with all my auspicious attributes and with all my glories. In the case of such devotees aspiring after eternal union with Me, I Myself undertake the responsibility of bringing them to Myself (Yoga translated as ' prosperity') and of preserving them in that state for ever (Ksema translated as ' welfare'). The meaning is that they do not return to Samsara.

9.23 Those, however, who are devoted to Indra and other divinities, who rely on the three Vedas alone, and who, possessed of faith, worship Indra and other divinities --- they too worship Me actually in the light of the truth that all existing things constitute My body and have Me for their selves. In the light of

this principle, terms like Indra denote Me only. The worshippers of Indra and other deities therefore worship Me only, in ways not sanctioned by the Sastras. They do not worship Indra and other divinities with a proper understanding of the place of these deities in the light of the Vedanta texts. An example is ' Wherein (i.e., in the Supreme Self) the sacrifices known as the Caturhotri attain their fulfilment through the divinities' (Tai. Ar., 4) etc. These texts say in what way these forms of worship apply to these divinties. For all Vedanta texts lay down that the Supreme Person alone is to be worshipped directly when they enjoin the worship of Indra and other divinities, as they form the body of the Supreme Person. The meaning is that in the Caturhotri sacrifice like Agnihotra, the full moon and the new moon sacrifices etc., it is the Supreme Self only that is worshipped, as He abides as the self in Indra etc., who are the ostensible objects worshipped in these sacrifices by which these worshippers obtain their fulfilment through them. Therefore, the votaries of the three Vedas do not understand that these rituals form the worship of the Supreme Person and that He alone is to be worshipped. As they do not do so, they become experiencers of limited results, and they are again liable to fall into Samsara. Sri Krsna gives expressions to this:

9.24 I am ' the only Lord' --- the meaning is that I alone am the bestower of rewards everywhere. How wonderful is this, that though devoting themselves to the same kind of action, on account of the difference in intention some partake of a very small reward with the likelihood of fall, while some others partake of a reward in the form of attainment of the Supreme Person which is unalloyed, limitless, and incomparable! Sri Krsna explains this:

9.25 The term ' Vrata' in the text denotes will, intention or motive. Those who intend to worship gods, like Indra and others with the resolution, ' Let us worship Indra and other gods by ceremonies like the new moon and full moon sacrifices' --- such worshippers go to Indra and other gods. Those who intend worshipping manes, resolving ' Let us worship the manes through sacrifices,' --- such worshippers go to the manes or others resolving --- ' Let us worship the Yaksas, Raksasas,' Pisacas and other evil spirits' --- they go to them. ut those who, with the same rites of worship, worship Me with the intention, ' Let us

worship Lord Vasudeva, the Supreme Self, whose body is constituted of gods, the manes and the evil spirits' --- they are My worshippers and they reach Me only. Those who intend worshipping gods etc., attain gods etc. After sharing limited enjoyment with them, they are destroyed with them when the time comes for their destruction. ut My worshippers attain Me, who has no beginning or end, who is omniscient, whose will is unfailingly effective, who is a great ocean of innumerable auspicious attributes of unlimited excellence and whose bliss too is of limitless excellence. They do not return to Samsara. Such is the meaning. Sri Krsna continues to say, ' There is also another distinguishing characteristic of My worshippers.'

9.26 Whoever offers to Me with true devotion a leaf, or a flower, or a fruit or water, which can be easily obtained, I accept it. That true devotion is love of such an exalted kind that the devotee cannot sustain himself without making such offering; the devotee has no extraneous purpose other than serving Me. Such an offering coming from a heart rendered pure with that singleness of purpose of considering the offering as an end in itself --- I, the Lord of the universe, whose sport consists in the origin, maintenance and dissolution of the entire world, who has all desires fulfilled, whose will is always accomplished, whose auspicious attributes are unlimited and unsurpassed, who is enjoying the infinite and unsurpassed bliss that is in Myself --- I accept and enjoy the aforesaid type of offering, as if I was obtaining a desired object far beyond the range of My hopes. Thus it is declared in the Moksa-dharma: Whatever

9.27 Whatsoever worldly work you do for the sustenance of the body, whatsoever you set aside for the sustenance of the body, whatsoever Vedic acts, obligatory and occasional, like offerings, charity and austerity you practise --- do all that as an offering to Me. ' Arpana' is offering. Do all acts, secular and Vedic, as if the doer, the enjoyer and the worshipped were all offerings to Me. The import is this: The divinities etc., who are the objects of sacrificial worship, charities etc., and you, the agent and experiencer --- all belong to Me and have their essence, existence and actions dependent on Me. Thus only to Me, the supreme Principal (Sesi) and supreme agent, offer

everything --- yourself as the agent, experiencer and worshipper, all the host of divinities who are the object of worship and the sum of actions constituting the worship. Actuated by overwhelming love, contemplate yourself and other factors such as the objects of worship, as dependent on Me as My Sesas, and hence as of a nature that finds delight only in subservience to Me.

9.28 Thus, equipped with a mind which is firmly set in Yoga, called Sannyasa, considering yourself as one whose delight lies in being a subsidiary (Sesa) to Me and subject to My control and all acts to be My worship, and engaging yourself in secular and Vedic actions with such an attitude, you will free yourself from countless bonds, called ancient Karmas, productive of auspicious and inauspicious results which stands as a hindrance preventing you from attaining Me. Freed from them, you shall come to Me only. Listen now, to My supreme nature which transcends the world:

9.29 eing a refuge for all, I am the same to all creation, be they gods, animals, men or immovables, who exist differentiated from the highest to the lowest according to their birth, form, nature and knowledge. With regard to those seeking refuge, none is hateful because of inferiority in status by birth, form, nature, knowledge etc. No one is discarded as an object of odium. Likewise, it is not that one who has resorted to Me is dear to Me on account of any consideration like birth, status etc. That he has taken refuge in Me is the only consideration. The meaning is no one is accepted as a refuge for reasons like birth. ut those who worship Me as their sole objective I like, because I am exceedingly dear to them, and because they find it impossible to sustain themselves without My worship. So they abide in Me, irrespective of whether they are exalted or humble by birth etc. They abide in Me, as if they possess qualities equal to Mine. I also abide in them, as if they are My superiors. Moreover:

9.30 Even though he has transgressed rules that ought to be followed and has failed to avoid what a person belonging to a particular class should avoid, if he has begun to worship Me in the manner described above with undivided devotion, namely, with worship as the only purpose --- such a person must be

considered highly righteous. He is eminent among the worshippers of Visnu. He must be esteemed as fit for honour. The meaning is that he is equal to those Jnanins mentioned earlier. What can be the reason for this? The reason is that, he has rightly resolved, i.e., his resolve is in the proper direction. ' The Lord who forms the sole cause of the entire universe, who is the Supreme rahman, Narayana, the Lord of all mobile and immobile beings, is our Master, our Teacher, and our Friend, highest object of enjoyment,' --- such a resolve is difficult to be made by all. Its effect, unremitting worship which has no other purpose, will be found in him who makes such a resolve. Hence he is holy and is to be highly honoured. When this resolve, and unremitting worship which is its effect, are found in a person, he is not to be belittled; for, his transgression of rules is a negligible mistake compared to this kind of excellence. On the other hand he is to be regarded with high honour. Such is the meaning. No, if it be said that transgression of rules will annul the flow of worship, as declared in the Sruti passages like, ' One who has not ceased from bad conduct, is not tranquil, is not composed and also not calm in mind, cannot obtain Him through intelligence' (Ka. U., 1.2.24), Sri Krsna replies:

9.31 Quickly he becomes righteous, the Gunas of Rajas and Tamas in him being eradicated with their roots, as he has shaken off all evils through the worship of Myself without any ulterior motive but only because of My being dear to him. Quickly he becomes one whose mind is specially attuned to My worship with all the ancillaries and having all the obstacles removed. It is this kind of worship which was alluded to by the term. Dharma at the commencement of this chapter thus: ' Asraddhadanah purusa dharmasy' asya' etc., (9.3). Such a person obtains enduring peace, i.e., he attains to an eternal state, free from conduct contrary to the attainment of Myself, and from which there will be no return to Samsara. O Arjuna, you may affirm that one who has begun to worship Me in this way will not perish even though he is tarnished by some misconduct in the past. On account of his devotion to Me, he annihilates the entire host of obstacles. After obtaining eternal state of freedom from obstacles, he quickly obtains perfect hakti.

9.32 - 9.33 Women, Vaisyas and Sudras, and even those who are of sinful birth, can attain the supreme state by taking refuge in Me. How much more then the well-born rahmanas and royal sages who are devoted to me! Therefore, roayl sage that you are, do worship Me, as you have come to this transient and joyless world stricken by the threefold afflictions. Sri Krsna now describes the nature of hakti:

9.32 - 9.33 Women, Vaisyas and Sudras, and even those who are of sinful birth, can attain the supreme state by taking refuge in Me. How much more then the well-born rahmanas and royal sages who are devoted to me! Therefore, roayl sage that you are, do worship Me, as you have come to this transient and joyless world stricken by the threefold afflictions. Sri Krsna now describes the nature of hakti:

9.34 Focus your mind on Me; fix your mind on Me uninterruptedly like a continous stream of oil --- on Me the Ruler of rulers, antagonistic to all that is evil, the sole abode of auspiciousness, omniscient, whose resolve is always true, the sole cause of the entire universe, the Supreme rahman, the Supreme Person; on Me, of long large eyes like a lotus petal; who has the complexion of a clear blue cloud; whose shining lustre is like that of a thousand suns simultaneously risen; on Me, the great ocean of the nectar of beauty; of four arms, noble and strong, and of brilliant yellow raiment; on Me, adorned with a pure crown, fish-shaped ear-rings, garlands, bracelet on the arms and bangles at the wrist; on Me, the ocean of infinite mercy, affability, beauty, sweetness, majesty, magnanimity and parental affection; on Me, the refuge of all without exception and without regard to their differences; on Me the Lord of all. Sri Krsna again makes the same clear. e My devotee. e one whose mind is focussed on Me by contemplating on Me as exceedingly dear. Such is the meaning. He makes thie yet clearer. e My worshipper, namely, become engaged in My worship, which you have begun to practise by your experience of Me as supremely dear and unlimited and unsurpassed. What is called worship is the conduct of one who realises that he is absolutely a subsidiary --- (Sesa) of God. Worship consists also in offering all things of enjoyment such as waving of lights etc., all those things which come into bodily contact like

garlands, sandal paste etc., and those meant for offering like food preparations and other edibles. The meaning is this: Let your mind be focussed on Me so as to be engaged in My worship, resulting from love which is unlimited and unsurpassed and which is born from the experience of Myself. Again Sri Krsna expounds the same: ow down to Me. Do not be satisfied only with services of one who is absolutely subsidiary to me. Do services which are incomparably dear and animated by an experience of Myself who is dear and unlimited and unsurpassed. Also bow down to Me in utter humility, regarding Me as the supreme goal, i.e., He who is the supreme abode and the supreme goal. The meaning is that having resorted to Me, it is impossible for you to live without Me. Having disciplined the mind in this way and considering Me as the supreme goal, you will thus, through love which is unsurpassed and incomparable, obtain a mind which is fit for experiencing Me. You will then reach Me alone. Here the term Atman stands for the mind. The import is that, holding Me as the sole support, possesing a mind of this kind, meditating on Me, experiencing Me, worshipping Me and bowing down to Me --- you will reach Me alone. Thus, with such a turn of mind you carry on, for pleasing Me alone, your secular works for bodily sustenance and Vedic activities like obligatory and occasional rites, regarding them as actuated by Me and finding sole joy in absolute subservience to Me. You shall ever engage yourself in praising My names with love and in endeavouring to serve Me and bowing down to Me etc. You shall contemplate on the entire universe as being under My rule and being subsidiary (Sesa) to Me. Contemplating on the multitudes of My attributes, which are exceedingly dear to you, and practising every day this worship as described, you will reach Me alone.

BHAGAVADGITA

English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda

Chapter 10

10.1 The Lord said -- Listen with rapt attention to these words which I shall utter --- words which are supreme and which give you a much wider understanding of My greatness. I shall speak out to you about the rise and growth of devotion to Me, as you are pleased with listening to My greatness and as I too love you.

10.2 However supernatural the vision and however great the knowledge of the host of the gods and the wise seers may be, they cannot comprehend My powers. They do not know My name, actions, essence, attributes etc., for the reason that I am the source in every way of these gods and great seers. I am the source of their nature and knowledge, power etc. The knowledge given to them by Me according to their meritorious deeds constitutes the cause of their being gods, the great seers etc. That knowledge is limited. Thus, they have limited knowledge and do not know the real nature of My essence. Sri Krsna proceeds to explain that knowledge about His real nature, which is beyond the grasp of gods etc., and which is the means for release from the evil that stands in the way of the rise of devotion.

10.3 He who exists ' without being born' at any particular time unlike other beings is ' unborn' in the sense of being eternal. For, this attribute denotes a unique state distinct in kind both from insentient things which are subject to modifications, and from the self in Its state of involvement in Samsara when It is united with insentient matter. In that state the birth of the self involved in matter is generated by Karma. The temr ' Anadi' , or without beginning, is used to distinguish the state of the Lord, which is distinct in kind, from that of the liberated state which is birthless but can be said to have a beginning. For, to the liberated self, the state of liberation has a beginning, because, in regard to this, conjunction with matter which deserves to be abandoned, existed previously. Hence the term ' Anadi' implies that the Lord is without such conjunction and does not deserve the same description. The Sruti also says:

' Him who is stainless'   (Sve. U., 4.19). Thus, he who is undeluded among the mortals understands Me as ' the great Lord of the worlds,'   as the Lord of the lords of the worlds. My nature is incompatible with association with evil which has to be given up. What is called ' delusion'   is the wrong knowledge of taking Me as one among other entities of the same kind. To be bereft of this delusion is to be ' undeluded' . Such a person is released from all sins which stand against the rise of hakti to Me. The meaning is this: In this world, the king who rules over men is only like all those men. He has become a ruler by some good Karma. Such is not the case with the Lord of the gods (the Supreme eing). Even the lord of the cosmic egg (rahma) is of the same class as other beings in Samsara, because he too is a created being coming within the threefold classification of beings according to the three innate tendencies for growth --- namely Karma-bhavana, rahma-bhavana and Ubhaya-bhavana. These three are described respectively as fitness to practise work alone, fitness to practise meditation alone and fitness to practise both together. rahma comes under the third group. The Sruti also says, ' He who creates rahma'   (Sve. U., 6.18). The same is the case with all those who have acquired the eight superhuman powers like becoming atomic etc. ut I, the Supreme eing, is the great Lord of the worlds. He who is not subject to the delusion of regarding Me as of the same order as others, --- such a person knows Me as distinct in kind from non-conscient matter in its states as cause and effect, from the self whether bound or free, and from everything else, on account of all of them being subject to My control. I am antagonistic to all that is evil and I am the sole centre of innumerable auspicious attributes, unsurpassed and incomparable. It is also My inherent nature to be the controller of everything. One who understands Me to be all this is released from every sin. Thus, after showing the annihilation, by meditation on His nature, of all evil impeding the rise of hakti, and also of the rise of devotion, through implication, by the destruction of such opposing factors, Sri Krsna now explains the way in which hakti develops by meditation on His sovereign power and on the multitude of His auspicious attributes:

10.4 - 10.5 ' Intelligence'   is the power of the mind to determine. ' Knowledge'   is the power of determining the difference between the two entities --- non-

sentient matter and the individual self. ' Non-delusion' is freedom from the delusion of perceiving as silver the mother-of-pearl etc., which are different from silver etc., previously observed. ' Forbearance' , is a non-disturbed state of mind, even when there is a cause for getting disturbed. ' Truth' is speech about things as they are actually seen, and meant for the good of all beings. Here, the working of the mind in conformity with the ideal is intended, because the context is with reference to the working of the mind. ' Restraint' is the checking of the outgoing organs from their tendency to move towards their objects and generate evil. ' Self-control' is the restraint of the mind in the same manner. ' Pleasure' is the experience of what is agreeable to oneself. ' Pain' is th experience of what is adverse. ' Exaltation' is that state of elation of the mind caused by experiences which are agreeable to oneself. ' Depression' is the state of mind caused by disagreeable experiences. ' Fear' is the misery which springs from the perception of the cause of future sufferings. ' Fearlessness' is the absence of such feelings. ' Non-violence' is avoidance of being the cause of sorrow to others. ' Equability' is to become equable in mind whether good or bad befalls and to look upon with the same equanimity on what happens to oneself, friends and enemies. ' Cheerfulness' is the natural disposition to feel pleased with everything seen. ' Austerity' is the chastising of the body by denying to oneself pleasures, as enjoined by the scriptures. ' eneficence' is giving to another what contributes to one' s own enjoyment. ' Fame' is the renown of possessing good qualities. ' Infamy' is notoriety of possessing bad qualities. The workings of the mind which are in accordance with fame and infamy must be understood here, because it is the subject-matter of the context. Austerity and beneficence are to be understood in the same way. All these mental faculties --- these functioning of the mind --- resulting either in activity or inactivity, are from Me alone, i.e., are dependent on My volition. Sri Krsna declares: ' Thos agents who direct the creation, sustentation etc., of all beings, have their activity dependent on My Will.'

10.4 - 10.5 ' Intelligence' is the power of the mind to determine. ' Knowledge' is the power of determining the difference between the two entities --- non-sentient matter and the individual self. ' Non-delusion' is freedom from the delusion of perceiving as silver the mother-of-pearl etc., which are different

from silver etc., previously observed. ' Forbearance' , is a non-disturbed state of mind, even when there is a cause for getting disturbed. ' Truth' is speech about things as they are actually seen, and meant for the good of all beings. Here, the working of the mind in conformity with the ideal is intended, because the context is with reference to the working of the mind. ' Restraint' is the checking of the outgoing organs from their tendency to move towards their objects and generate evil. ' Self-control' is the restraint of the mind in the same manner. ' Pleasure' is the experience of what is agreeable to oneself. ' Pain' is th experience of what is adverse. ' Exaltation' is that state of elation of the mind caused by experiences which are agreeable to oneself. ' Depression' is the state of mind caused by disagreeable experiences. ' Fear' is the misery which springs from the perception of the cause of future sufferings. ' Fearlessness' is the absence of such feelings. ' Non-violence' is avoidance of being the cause of sorrow to others. ' Equability' is to become equable in mind whether good or bad befalls and to look upon with the same equanimity on what happens to oneself, friends and enemies. ' Cheerfulness' is the natural disposition to feel pleased with everything seen. ' Austerity' is the chastising of the body by denying to oneself pleasures, as enjoined by the scriptures. ' eneficence' is giving to another what contributes to one' s own enjoyment. ' Fame' is the renown of possessing good qualities. ' Infamy' is notoriety of possessing bad qualities. The workings of the mind which are in accordance with fame and infamy must be understood here, because it is the subject-matter of the context. Austerity and beneficence are to be understood in the same way. All these mental faculties --- these functioning of the mind --- resulting either in activity or inactivity, are from Me alone, i.e., are dependent on My volition. Sri Krsna declares: ' Thos agents who direct the creation, sustentation etc., of all beings, have their activity dependent on My Will.'

10.6 ' The seven great Rsis of yore' , namely, those seven great Rsis like hrgu etc., were from the mind of rahma in the cycle of the past Manu to perpetuate the creation permanently; and the four Manas called the sons of Savarna existed for the work of eternal sustentation. All creatures in the world are their progeny. So they are the generators of this progeny as also their sustainers till the time of Pralaya. These hrgu etc., and the Manus, derive their mental

condition from Me. Their disposition is My disposition --- they subsist on My disposition. The meaning is they follow My will.

10.7 ' Supernal manifestation' is the glory (Vibhuti) of the Lord. He who in truth knows this supernal manifestation that all origination, sustentation and activity depend on Me, and also that Yoga of Mine which is in the form of auspicious attributes antagonistic to all that is evil --- such a person becomes united with the Yoga or hakti of an unshakable nature. Of this, there is no doubt. The meaning is: You yourself will see that the knowledge concerning the supernal manifestation and auspicious attributes of Mine will increase devotion. Sri Krsna now shows that the growth of devotion is of the form of the development of knowledge of His supreme state.

10.8 I am the ' origin' , namely, the cause of originating everything in this universe consisting of wonderful sentient and non-sentient beings. From Me proceed everything. Thinking thus of My sovereignty, natural and unhindered, and knowing Me as endowed with a multitude of auspicious attributes like condescension, beauty, parental affection etc., the wise or the men of knowledge worship Me with devotion endowed as I am with all auspicious attributes. ' hava' is a particular disposition, here a loving disposition, of the mind. The meaning is that they worship Me with intense yearning of the heart. How?

10.9 They live with their minds ' focussed' on Me, namely, with their minds fixed on Me; with their ' Pranas' , i.e., life, centred on Me --- the meaning is that they are unable to sustain themselves without Me. They ' inspire one another' by speaking about My attributes which have been experienced by them and narrating My divine and adorable deeds. They live in contentment and bliss at all times. The speakers are delighted by their own speech, because it is spontaneous, without any ulterior motive; the listeners too feel the speech to be unsurpassingly and incomparably dear to them. They thus live in bliss.

10.10 To those ' ceaselessly united with Me,' namely, those who desire ceaseless union with Me, and who are worshipping Me, I grant with love, that

same ' uddhi-yoga' or devotional attitude of a mature state. y that they come to Me. Likewise:

10.11 To show favour to them alone, abiding in their mental activity, i.e., established as the object of thought in their mind, and manifesting the host of My auspicious attributes by the brillinat lamp called knowledge relating to Me, --- I dispel the darkness incompatible with knowledge. This darkness is born of ignorance in the form of old Karma consisting of attachment to objects other than Myself, to which they were previously habituated. Thus having heard of the Lord as having a host of auspicious attributes, and of the extent of His sovereign glories which are unique and different from all others and which generate unsurpassed bliss in listeners, --- Arjuna desired to listen to the details about them and said:

10.12 - 10.13 Arjuna said -- You are He whom the Srutis proclaim as the Supreme rahman, the Supreme Light, the Supreme Sanctifier. Thus the Srutis assert: ' From whom all these beings are born, by whom, when born, they live and unto whom they go when they perish --- desire to know that well. This is rahman' (Tai. U., 3.1.1); ' He who knows rahman attains the Highest' (Ibid., 2.1.1); and ' He who knows the Supreme rahman becomes the rahman' (Mun. U., 3.2.9). Likewise He is the Supreme Light. The term ' Dhaman' connotes light. He is the Supreme Light as taught (in the Upanisads): ' Now, the light which shines higher than this heaven ...' (Cha. U., 3.13. 7); ' Attaining the Supreme Light. He appears with His own form' (Ibid., 8.12.2); ' The gods worship Him as the Light of lights' (r. U., 4.4.16). So also He is the Supreme Sanctifier: He makes the meditator bereft of all the impurities, and also destroyes them without any trace. The Srutis declares: ' As water clings not to the leaf of a lotus-flower, so evil deeds cling not to him who knows thus' (Cha. U., 4.14.3): ' Just as the fibre of Isika reed (reed-cotton) laid on a fire is burnt up, so also all his sins are burnt up' (Ibid., 5.24.3); and ' Narayana is Supreme rahman, Narayana is Supreme Light, Narayana is Supreme Self' (Ma. Na., 9.4). Sages are those who know in reality the higher truth (the Supreme rahman), and the lower truth (individual selves); they speak of You as the eternal Divine Person, Primal Lord, the unborn and all-pervading. So also

divine sage Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyasa declare: ' This Narayana, Lord of Sri, the resident of the Milk Ocean, has come to the city of Mathura abandoning his Serpent-couch.' ' Where Madhusudana is, there is the blessed Dvaravati. He is the Lord Himself, the ancient One and Eternal Dharma (Ma. h. Vana. 88. 24-25). Those who know the Vedas and those who know the self declare the great-minded Krsna to be the eternal Dharma. Of all sanctifiers, Govinda is said to be the most sanctifying, the most auspicious among the auspicious. The lotus-eyed God of gods, the eternal, abides as the three worlds ... Hari who is beyond thought, abides thus. Madhusudana is there alone' (Ma. ha. Vana., 88.24-28). Similarly it is stated: ' O Arjuna, where the divine, the eternal Narayana the Supreme Self is, there the entire universe, the sacred water and the holy shrines are to be found. That is sacred, that is Supreme rahman, that is sacred waters, that is the austerity grove ... there dwell the divine sages, the Siddhas and all those rich in austerities where the Primal Lord, the agent Yogin Madhusudana dwells. It is the most sacred among the sacred. For you, let there be no doubt about this' (Ibid., 90.28-32); ' Krsna Himself is the origin and dissolution of all beings. For, this universe, consisting of sentient and non-sentient entities, was generated for the sake of Krsna' (Ma. ha. Sabha., 38.23). And you yourself say so in the passage beginning with ' Earth, water, fire, ether, mind, intellect and Ahankara --- this Prakrti, which is divided eightfold, is Mine' (7.4) and ending with ' I am the origin of all; from Me proceed everything' (10.8).

10.12 - 10.13 Arjuna said -- You are He whom the Srutis proclaim as the Supreme rahman, the Supreme Light, the Supreme Sanctifier. Thus the Srutis assert: ' From whom all these beings are born, by whom, when born, they live and unto whom they go when they perish --- desire to know that well. This is rahman' (Tai. U., 3.1.1); ' He who knows rahman attains the Highest' (Ibid., 2.1.1); and ' He who knows the Supreme rahman becomes the rahman' (Mun. U., 3.2.9). Likewise He is the Supreme Light. The term ' Dhaman' connotes light. He is the Supreme Light as taught (in the Upanisads): ' Now, the light which shines higher than this heaven ...' (Cha. U., 3.13. 7); ' Attaining the Supreme Light. He appears with His own form' (Ibid., 8.12.2); ' The gods worship Him as the Light of lights' (r. U., 4.4.16). So also He is the Supreme

Sanctifier: He makes the meditator bereft of all the impurities, and also destroyes them without any trace. The Srutis declares: ' As water clings not to the leaf of a lotus-flower, so evil deeds cling not to him who knows thus' (Cha. U., 4.14.3): ' Just as the fibre of Isika reed (reed-cotton) laid on a fire is burnt up, so also all his sins are burnt up' (Ibid., 5.24.3); and ' Narayana is Supreme rahman, Narayana is Supreme Light, Narayana is Supreme Self' (Ma. Na., 9.4). Sages are those who know in reality the higher truth (the Supreme rahman), and the lower truth (individual selves); they speak of You as the eternal Divine Person, Primal Lord, the unborn and all-pervading. So also divine sage Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyasa declare: ' This Narayana, Lord of Sri, the resident of the Milk Ocean, has come to the city of Mathura abandoning his Serpent-couch.' ' Where Madhusudana is, there is the blessed Dvaravati. He is the Lord Himself, the ancient One and Eternal Dharma (Ma. h. Vana. 88. 24-25). Those who know the Vedas and those who know the self declare the great-minded Krsna to be the eternal Dharma. Of all sanctifiers, Govinda is said to be the most sanctifying, the most auspicious among the auspicious. The lotus-eyed God of gods, the eternal, abides as the three worlds ... Hari who is beyond thought, abides thus. Madhusudana is there alone' (Ma. ha. Vana., 88.24-28). Similarly it is stated: ' O Arjuna, where the divine, the eternal Narayana the Supreme Self is, there the entire universe, the sacred water and the holy shrines are to be found. That is sacred, that is Supreme rahman, that is sacred waters, that is the austerity grove ... there dwell the divine sages, the Siddhas and all those rich in austerities where the Primal Lord, the agent Yogin Madhusudana dwells. It is the most sacred among the sacred. For you, let there be no doubt about this' (Ibid., 90.28-32); ' Krsna Himself is the origin and dissolution of all beings. For, this universe, consisting of sentient and non-sentient entities, was generated for the sake of Krsna' (Ma. ha. Sabha., 38.23). And you yourself say so in the passage beginning with ' Earth, water, fire, ether, mind, intellect and Ahankara --- this Prakrti, which is divided eightfold, is Mine' (7.4) and ending with ' I am the origin of all; from Me proceed everything' (10.8).

10.14 Therefore, I deem all this to be a statement of facts as they are in reality, and not merely an exaggeration --- all this which You tell me of Your sovereign

glory and infinite auspicious attributes which are unique, unbounded, unsurpassed and natural. Therefore, O Lord, O Treasure of unsurpassed knowledge, power, strength, sovereignty, valour and radiance! --- neither the gods nor the demons who possess limited knowledge know ' Your manifestation' , the way in which You manifest Yourself.

10.15 O Supreme Person, You Yourself know Yourself by Yourself; namely, by virtue of Your knowledge! O Creator of beings, namely, O Originator of all beings! O Lord of all beings, namely, O Controller of all beings! O God of gods, namely, O the Supreme Deity even of all divinities! Just as the gods surpass men, animals, birds, reptiles etc., in beauty, condescension and the host of auspicious qualities, You, O Lord, in the same manner, transcend all these gods in all these attributes! O Ruler of the universe, O Master of the universe!

10.16 Whatever manifestations there be that are divine, unique to Yourself --- You alone are capable of describing them without exception. ' You reveal them Yourself' is the meaning. With these innumerable Vibhutis, these instances of your manifestation indicating Your will to rule, You abide, pervading all these worlds as their controller. What is the need for such description? The answer follows:

10.17 I, ' Your devotee' (Yogin), namely, one engaged in hakti Yoga, and ' constantly meditating on You' with devotion, namely, embarked on meditation on You, --- how am I to know You, the object of meditation, as possessing a multitude of auspicious attributes like sovereignty etc.? And in what varied modes of mental dispositions, which are as yet untold and which are different from the intelligence, knowledge etc., described earlier, are You the Controller of all, to be meditated upon by me.

10.18 Speak to me again in full, your association with the qualities of being the creator etc., and Your sovereignty, Your rulership, which have been briefly described in ' I am the origin of all; from Me proceed everything' (10.8). For I am not satiated by hearing Your ambrosial words. The meaning is, ' My

enthusiasm to know more and more of your ambrosial teachings is known to You.'

10.19 The Lord said -- O Arjuna, I shall tell you My auspicious manifestations --- those that are prominent among these. The term ' Pradhanya' connotes pre-eminence. For it will be said, ' Know Me to be the chief among family priests' (10.24). I shall declare to you those that are prominent in the world. For it would not be possible to tell or listen to them in detail, because there is no limit to them. To be a Vibhuti, the manifestation referred to should be under the control of the Lord; because it is stated: ' He who in truth knows this supernal manifestation and the seat of auspicious attributes' (10.7), after listing the various kinds of mental dispositions like intelligence etc., of all beings. Similarly it has been stated there that ' being the creator etc.,' is meant by the term Yoga, and that their ' being actuated,' meant by the term Vibhuti. Again it is stated: ' I am the origin of all; from me proceed everything; thinking thus, the wise worship Me with all devotion' (10.8). Sri Krsna clearly declares that he rules over all creatures by actuating them from within as their Self. He also declares His being the creator, sustainer and destroyer of everything, as connected by the term Yoga.

10.20 I am the Self dwelling in the heart of all beings who constitute My body. What is called ' Self' is in every way the supporter, controller and the principal of a body. It is further declared: ' And I am seated in the hearts of all; from Me are memory, knowledge and their removal' (15.15), and ' The Lord dwells, O Arjuna in the heart of every being causing them to spin round and round by His power, as if set on a wheel' (18.61). The Srutis also declare: ' He who, dwelling in all beings, is within all beings, whom all beings do not know, whose body all beings are, who controls all beings from within, is your Inner Controller, immortal Self (r. U., 3.7.15); and ' He who, dwelling in the self is within the self, whom the self does not know, whose body the self is, and who controls the self from within, He is your Inner Controller and Immortal Self' (Sata. r., 14.5.30). Thus, I am the Self of all beings and I am their beginning, the middle and also the end. The meaning is that I am the cause of their origination, sustentation and dissolution. Thus, having explained that the Lord' s

immanence in all beings, which are His manifestations having Him, as their Self, is the ground for naming them in the manner of Samanadhikaranya or co-ordinate predication with Him (i.e., predication that they are He Himself), Sri Krsna proceeds to present some specific or distinguished manifestations in the same style of co-ordinate predication. As the Lord abides as the Self in all, the final significance of all terms culminates in Him. Terms such as god, man, bird, tree etc., though they signify the respective physical forms of those objects, they culminate through them in the selves in them as their final significance. Just like that here it is going to be stated in the conclusion of the account of the manifestations of the Lord, that the Lord' s immanence in them all as their Self is the basis for describing them in such co-ordinate predication (as He Himself). The text ' There is nothing, moving or unmoving, apart from Me' (10.39) says that they are inseparable from Him, and this inseparability is the result of their being under His control. This has been initially declared in the words ' All proceed from Me' (10.8). [This word Samanadhikaranya is translated by some also as ' grammatical co-ordination.' It is a context in which a number of words, usually having varying denotations, are used to signify an identical object. This kind of co-ordinate relation occurs in all the following verses in which Sri Krsna equates Himself with various objects having different denotations as Atman, Visnu among the Adityas, Indra, Marici, Sankara, Kubera, etc. Further explanation is given in the commentary.]

10.21 Of Adityas, who are twelve in number, I am the twelfth Aditya, called Visnu, who is paramount. Of luminuous bodies, namely, among luminaries in the world, I am the sun, the most brilliant luminary. Of Maruts I am the paramount Marici. Of constellations, I am the moon. The genitive case here is not to specify one out of many included in a group. Its use is the same as what is exemplifed in the statement ' I am the consciousness in all beings' (10.22). I am the moon who is the Lord of the constellations.

10.22 Of the Vedas, namely, Of Rk, Yajus, Saman, Atharva, I am that Samaveda which is the paramount one. Of the gods, I am Indra. Of eleven sense-organs, I am the sense-organ called Manas which is most paramount. Of living beings, namely, of those with consciousness, I am that

consciousness. Here too the genitive is not used for specifying.

10.23 Of eleven Rudras I am Sankara. Of Yaksas and Raksasas I am Kubera, son of Visravas. Among the eight Vasus I am Agni. Of mountains, namely, of those mountains which shine with peaks, I am Meru.

10.24 I am that hraspati who is paramount among family priests. Of generals, I am Skanda. Of reservoirs of waters, O am the ocean.

10.25 Of great seers like Marici etc., I am hrgu. Words are sounds that convey meaning. Of such words, I am the single-lettered word Pranava (Or Om). Of the sacrifices, I am the sacrifice of Japa (sacred formula silently repeated) which is the most prominent form of sacrificial offerings. Of immovables or mountains, I am the Himalaya.

10.26 - 10.29 Of trees I am Asvattha which is worthy of worship. Of celestial seers I am Narada. Kamadhuk is the divine cow. I am Kandarpa, the cause of progeny. Sarpas are single-headed snakes while Nagas are many-headed snakes. Aquatic creatures are known as Yadamsi. Of them I am Varuna. Of subdures, I am Yama, the son of the sun-god.

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10.30 Of those who reckon with the desire to cause evil, I am the god of death --- (here an emissary of his who records the time of death of creatures is meant).

10.31 Of moving things, namely, of things whose nature is to move, I am the wind. Of those who bear weapons, I am Rama. Here the quality of bearing weapons is the Vibhuti, as no other sense is possible. Aditya etc., being individual selves, constitute attributes of the Lord, who is their Self as they constitute His body. Therefore they stand in the same position of the attribute as that of bearing weapons.

10.32 Those that undergo creation are ' creatures' . Their beginning is the cause. The meaning is that, of the creatures which are being created at all times, I am Myself the creator. Similarly, I am the end, namely the destroyer of everyone of those who are being destroyed at all times. Similarly I am the middle, namely, the sustentation. The meaning is, I am the sustainer of those who are being sustained at all times. Of those who indulge in Jalpa (argument) and Vitanda (perverse criticism) etc., I am the fair reasoning which determines the truth.

10.33 Of letters I am the alphabet ' a' , which is the base of all letters as established in the Sruti: ' The letter ' a' itself is all speech' (Ai. Ai., 3.2.3). Samasika means collection of compound words. In it, I am the Dvandva compound; it is eminent because the meanings of both constituent terms are important. I am Myself imperishable Time composed of (divisions like) Kala, Muhurta etc. I am the four-faced Hiranyagarbha who is the creator of all.

10.34 I am also death which snatches away the life of all. Of those that shall be born I am that called birth. Of women (i.e., of goddesses who are the powers of the Lord) I am prosperity (Sri); I am fame (Kirti); I am speech (Vak); I am memory (Smrti); I am intelligence (Medha); I am endurance (Dhrti); and I am forgiveness (Ksama).

10.35 Of Saman hymns, I am the rhatsaman. Of meters, I am the Gayatri. Of seasons, I am the season of flowers (spring).

10.36 Of those who practise fraud with a view to defeat each other, I am gambling such a dice-play etc., I am the victory of those who achieve victory. I am the effort of those who make effort. I am the magnanimity of those who possess magnanimity of mind.

10.37 Here the Supreme Vibhuti (manifestation) is that of being the son of Vasudeva, because no other meaning is possible. Of sons of Pandu, I am Dhananjaya or Arjuna. Of sages who perceive truth by meditation, I am Vyasa. The seers are those who are wise.

10.38 I am the power of punishment of those who punish, if law is transgressed. In regard to those who seek victory I am policy which is the means of getting victory. Of factors associated with secrecy. I am silence. I am the wisdon of those who are wise.

10.39 Of all beings, in whatever condition they may exist, whether manifest or not, I alone am that state. Whatever host of beings are said to exist, they do not exist without Me as their Self. In the statement, ' Nothing that moves or does not move exists without Me' , it is taught that the Lord exists as the Self, as said in the beginning: ' I am the Self, seated in the hearts of all beings' (10.20). The purport is that the entire host of beings in every state, is united with Me, their Self. y this He makes it clear that He, being the Self of all things, is the ground for His being denoted by everything in co-ordinate predication.

10.40 There is no limit to the divine and auspicious manifestations of My will to rule. ut it has been described to some extent by Me in brief by means of a few illustrations.

10.41 Whatever host of beings has ' power' , namely the capacity and means to rule over; has ' splendour' , has beauty or prosperity in wealth, grains etc., has ' energy,' namely, is engaged in auspicious undertakings --- know such manifestations as coming fro a fragment of My ' power' . Power (Tejas) is the capacity to overcome opposition. The meaning is, know them as arising from a fraction of My inconceivable power of subduing.

10.42 What is the use to you of this detailed knowledge taught by Me? I sustain this universe with an infinitesimal fraction of My power --- this universe consisting of sentient and non-sentient entities, whether in effect or causal condition, whether gross or subtle --- in such a manner that it does not violate My will in preserving its proper form, existence and various activities. As said by hagavan Parasara: ' On an infinitesimal fraction of this energy, this universe rests' (V. P., 1.9.53).

BHAGAVADGITA

English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda

Chapter 11

11.1 Arjuna said -- To show favour to me, who is deluded by the misconception that the body is the self, these words of supreme mystery concerned with the self, i.e., which is a proper description of the self, have been spoken by You in words beginning from ' There was never a time when I did not exist' (2.12) and ending with, ' Therefore, O Arjuna, become a Yogin' (6.46). y that this delusion of mine about the self is entirely removed.

11.2 Likewise, beginning from the seventh, and ending with the tenth discourse, the origination and dissolution of all beings other than You, as issuing from You, the Supreme Self, have been heard at length by me. Your unlimited greatness, immutable and eternal, Your principalship (Sesitva) over all sentient and non-sentient things, Your supreme greatness consisting of the host of auspicious attributes like knowledge, strength etc., Your being the supporter of all things and actuator of all activities like thinking, blinking etc., have also been heard. Here the term, ' hi' (verily) expresses the desire to have the vision which is going to be revealed.

11.3 O Supreme Lord, it is certain that it is even as you have described Yourself. O Supreme Person, O ocean of compassion for your dependants! I, however, wish to see or wish to realise directly, Your Lordly form peculiar to you --- the form as the sovereign, protector, creator, destroyer, supporter of all, the mine of auspicious attributes, supreme and distinct from all other entities.

11.4 If You think that Your form as all-creator, as all-ruler and as all-supporter, can be seen by me, then, O Lord of Yoga --- Yoga is the property of having knowledge and other auspicious attributes, for it will be said later on: ' ehold My Lordly Yoga' (11.8) --- O treasure of knowledge, strength, sovereignty, valour, power and glory which are inconceivable in any one else! Reveal Yourself to me completely. ' Avyayam' (completely) is an adverb. The meaning is, ' Reveal everything about Yourself to me.' Thus, prayed to by Arjuna, who

was desirous to know, and whose voice was therefore choked with fervour, the Lord said as follows to him:

11.5 The Lord said -- ehold My forms which are the foundation of all, hundreds upon thousands, varied and possessing manifold modes. They are divine, i.e., supernatural. They are multi-formed and multi-coloured like white, black etc. And they are of varied configurations. ehold that form!

11.6 ehold in My single form (i.e., the many forms in the one form revealed to Arjuna), the twelve Adityas, eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, the two Asvins and forty-nine Maruts. This is just illustrative. ehold all those things directly perceived in this world and those described in the Sastras, and also many marvels, not seen before in all the worlds and in all the Sastras.

11.7 ' Here' , in this one body of Mine, and even there, gathered together in a single spot, behold the universe with all mobile and immobile entities. Whatever else you desire to see (i.e., Arjuna' s chances of victory), behold that also in one part of this single body.

11.8 I shall reveal to you the whole universe in one part of my body. ut, with your physical eye, which can see only limited and conditioned things, you cannot behold Me, such as I am, different in kind from everything else and illimitable. So I bestow on you, a divine, namely, supernatural, eye by which you may perceive Me. ehold My Lordly Yoga' (sovereign endowment)! ehold My unique Yoga (special power)! The meaning is, ' ehold My Yoga such as infinite knowledge and such other attributes and endless manifestations of lordly power!'

11.9 Sanjaya said -- Having thus spoken, Sri Krsna, who is the great Lord of Yoga, namely, the Lord of supremely wonderful attributes --- Sri Krsna who is Narayana, the Supreme rahman now incarnated as the son of Arjuna' s maternal uncle and seated as a charioteer in his chariot --- showed Arjuna, the son of Pritha His paternal aunt, that Lordly form uniquely His own, which is the ground of the entire universe, which is manifold and wonderful, and which

rules over everything. And that form was like this:

11.10 - 11.11 ' Divyam' means resplendent. ' Anantam' (boundless) means that form is not limited by time and space because of its being the foundation of the entire universe in the past, present and future. ' Visvatomukham' means facing in all directions. This form is adorned with divine raiments, perfumes, garlands, ornaments and weapons appropriate to it. He explains the same resplendence expressed by the term ' Divyam' :

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11.12 This is for illustrating that His splendour is infinite. The meaning is that it is of the nature of inexhaustible radiance.

11.13 ' There' , in that unique and divine body of the God of gods --- infinite in length and breadth, with innumerable hands, stomachs, faces and eyes, of immeasurable splendour, equipped with innumerable divine weapons, adorned with innumerable divine ornaments appropriate to itself and with divine garlands and raiments, fragrant with celestial perfumes and full of wonders ----, there Arjuna beheld with the appropriate divine eyes granted by the grace of the Lord, the ' entire universe' consisting of Prakrti (material Nature) and the selves, all remaining in ' one single spot,' namely, at one single point. He beheld ' the whole universe' with all its sub-divisions, differentiated into varied and wonderful classes of experiencing beings like rahma, gods, animals, men, immovables etc., and the places, objects and means of experiences such as earth, ether, Rasatala, Atala, Vitala, Sutala etc. He beheld thus the entire universe as depicted in such texts as those starting with ' I am the origin of all; from Me proceed everything' (10.8), ' Indeed I shall tell you, O Arjuna, My glorious self-manifestations' (10.9), ' I am the Self, O Arjuna, dwelling in the

hearts of all beings' (10.20), and ' Of Adityas, I am Visnu' (10.21), and ending with ' Nothing that moves or does not move exists without Me' (10.39), and ' I remain, with a single fraction of Myself sustaining this whole universe' (10.42).

11.14 Then Arjuna became overcome with amazement on seeing the Lord, at a point of whose being this wonderful universe in its entirely stands supported, who enables all things to act, and who is the possesor of a host of auspicious attributes like omniscience. With his hairs standing erect, he bowed down like a stick, and with folded hands, he spoke thus:

11.15 Arjuna said -- O Lord! I behold in Your body all gods and all classes of living beings as also rahma, the four-faced ruler of the cosmic egg. So too Siva (Isa) who is seated in the lotus-seated rahma, meaning that Siva abides by the directions of rahma. So also all the seers of whom the divine seers are the foremost; and lustrous snakes like Vasuki, Taksaka etc.

11.16 I behold Your infinite form on all sides with many arms, stomachs, mouths and eyes. O Lord of the universe, namely, the controller of the universe, O Universal Form having the universe as Your body! As You are infinite, therefore, I see no end, no middle and no beginning for You.

11.17 I behold you a mass of light shining everywhere, hard to look at, blazing like a burning fire and the sun. You, who are identifiable with Your divine diadem, mace and discus, are indefinable and immeasurable.

11.18 You alone are the Supreme ' Imperishable Person' indicated as that which ought to be realised in such Upanisadic passages as: ' Two sciences are to be known' (Mun. U., 1.1.4). You alone are the ' Supreme Substratum' of the universe, i.e., supreme support of this universe. You are ' immutable' , namely, not liable to mutation. Whatever might be your attributes and divine manifestations, You remain unchanged in Your form. You alone are the guardian of ' the eternal law' --- You who protect the eternal Dharma of the Veda by incarnations like this. I know you are the everlasting Person. I know

You are the eternal Person, described in such passages as, ' I know this great Purusa' (Tai. A., 3.12.7) and ' Person who is higher than the high' (Mun. U., 3.2.8). You, who were till now known to me as the most distinguished of the race of Yadu, have been realised by me now through direct perception as of this nature, i.e., of a nature unknown to me before. Such is the meaning.

11.19 I behold You as without beginning, middle and end. Your might is infinite, of unsurpassed excellence. Here the term ' might' is used for illustration. The meaning is that You are the sole repository of knowledge, strength, sovereignty, valour, power and glory, one whose excellence cannot be surpassed. Your arms are infinite, i.e., they are countless. This is also for illustration, implying that You have an infinite number of arms, stomachs, feet, mouths etc. The sun and moon are Your eyes; all Your eyes are like the moon and the sun, beaming with grace and power. The grace is directed towards the devotees like the gods who offer salutations etc., and power is directed against Asuras, Raksasas etc., who are opposed to these. For it will be said later on: ' The Raksasas flee on all sides in fear, and all the hosts of Siddhas bow down to You' (11.36). Your mouth is emitting fire, namely, the fire appropriate for destroying all things, as the Fire of Time consumes the world at the time of dissolution. With Your own radiance You are warming the universe. y radiance (Tejas) is meant the poweer to vanquish others. I behold You warming (or governing) the universe with Your own radiance. The meaning is this: ' I directly realise You' as taught before as the Creator of all, as the supporter of everything, as the sovereign over everything, as the destroyer of everything, as the ocean of knowledge and other infinite attributes, as without beginning, middle and end, and as possessing a divine body of this nature. How, in one divine body, can there be many stomachs etc.? This is possible in the following way: From a hip of infinite extent, stomachs etc., as described, branc off upwards. The divine feet etc., branch off downwards. So there is no contradiction in attributing a pair of eyes for each face. ' On perceiving You to be thus, the gods etc., and myself, have become frightened --- says Arjuna in the following words:

11.20 The terms, ' heaven and earth,' imply all the upper and lower worlds. The ' Antara' , or that between heaven and earth, denotes the space between them in which are located all the worlds. You alone pervade all the space and all the quarters. ' eholding Your marvellous and teriible form,' beholding Your form of infinite length and extent, marvellous and terrible, the three worlds are trembling. Gods headed by rahma, the Asuras, the manes, the Siddhas, the Gandharvas, the Yaksas, and Raksasas have come with a desire to see the battle. All the ' three worlds' consisting of these friendly, antagonistic and neutral beings are extremely frightened. ' Mahatman' means one, the dimension of whose mind has no limits. It has to be understood that like Arjuna, other beings also were granted by the Lord the divine eye capable of directly perceiving the Form which supports the universe. If it be asked why, the reply is that it was for demonstrating to Arjuna His sovereignty. Hence it is stated here: ' eholding Your marvellous and terrible form, O Mahatman, the three worlds are greatly overwhelmed with fear.'

11.21 These hosts of superior Devas beholding You as the foundation of the universe, rejoice and move towards You. Among them, some in fear, on seeing Your extremely terrible and wonderful form, ' extol,' namely pronounce sentences in the form of praise, according to their knowledge. Others, the bands of seers and Siddhas, knowers of the truth, higher and lower, saying ' Hail,' glorify You in hymns of abounding praise which are suitable to the Lord.

11.22 Usmapa means manes, because the Sruti declares: ' Verily the manes receive the hot portions of the offerings' (Tai. r., 1.3.10). All these, struck with amazement, behold You.

11.23 eholding Your mighty form, as described earlier, which is an exceedingly terrifying figure because of the large teeth --- all the worlds, described earlier and containing three kinds of beings, friendly, antagonistic and neutral, and I myself too have become panic-stricken.

11.24 The term ' Nabhas' denotes the Supreme Heaven (Parama-Vyoman), which is beyond the Prakrti composed of the three Gunas as established by the Sruti passages such as: ' That is in the Imperishable Supreme Heaven' (Ma. Na. U., 1.2), ' Him, sun-coloured and beyond Tamas' (Sve., 3.8) ' The dweller beyond the Rajas' (Rg. S., 2.6.25.5) and ' He who is the president in the Supreme Heaven' (Rg. S., 8.9.17.7). This can be understood as implied in the statement that ' the form touches the Supreme Heaven.' It expresses the idea that it is the foundation of all --- of the principle of the Prakrti with its conditions, and of the individual selves in all states. It has also been initially declared: ' For by You alone are pervaded the interspace of heaven and earth ...' (11.20). ' eholding Your form shining, multicoloured, and with yawning mouths and large and resplendent eyes, my inner being trembles in fear. I am unable to find support, namely, I am unable to find support for the body. I am unable to get peace of mind and of the senses. O Visnu, namely, O Pervader, beholding You pervading everything, incomparable in magnitude, extremely wonderful and terrible, I find my limbs quivering and my senses agitated.' Such is the meaning.

11.25 Looking at Your mouths, extremely terrifying and like cosmic fire at the end of the universe, and operating for the destruction of everything, I have lost the sense of recognising the quarters of the sky, nor do I feel happy and peaceful. O Abode of all the worlds, O Lord of all the Devas, namely, O Overlord of even gods like rahma! e gracious unto me. The meaning is: ' Do act in such a way that I may attain my natural condition. Arjuna' s charioteer (Parthasarathi), thus showing that all the worlds depend upon Him for their existence and activities, showed to the son of Prtha (Arjuna) that what He wanted to do, making Arjuna a mere instrument of His, was to lighten the burden of the earth through the destruction of all those who were of Asuric manifestations and who, in the guise of kings, were presenting themselves as the sons of Dhrtarastra and their followers. Many such embodiments of Asuras were present also in the ranks of Yudhisthira' s followers. And Arjuna, after having realised with the divine eyes, received through His grace, the complete manifestation of the Lord as the Creator etc., witnessed also the slaughter of the followers of the sons of Dhrtarastra etc., in that Lord Himself, who is the

Self of all, even though it (the slaughter) had not happened actually according to human calculations. Arjuna continues:

11.26 -- 11.27 All these sons of Dhrtarastra like Duryodhana and others like hisma, Drona, and Suta' s son Karna together with the hosts of monarchs on their side and also the leading warriors on our side, are hastening to their destruction; they enter Your fearful mouths with terrible fangs; some, caught between the teeth are seen with their heads crushed to powder.

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11.28 - 11.29 These innumerable kings rush to their destruction in Your flaming mouths, even as many torrents of rivers flow towards the ocean and moths rush into a blazing fire.

11.28 - 11.29 These innumerable kings rush to their destruction in Your flaming mouths, even as many torrents of rivers flow towards the ocean and moths rush into a blazing fire.

11.30 Devouring all these kings with Your flaming mouths, You lick them up, namely, lick up again and again in great anger. Your lips etc., are wet with their blood. Your fiery rays scorch the universe by the brilliant flow of radiance filling the whole universe. You have manifested Yourself in this terrible form for revealing Your limitless sovereignty as requested by me thus: ' Reveal Yourself to me completely' (11.4), so that I may realise Your limitless sovereignty.

11.31 Who are You of this terrible form, what do You intend to do? I wish to know. For I do not know Your intended actions. Tell me this. Salutations to You, O Supreme God! Salutations to You, Lord of everything! Say with what

object and for what purpose You have assumed this form of the destroyer. Assume a pleasing form. The Lord, the charioteer of Arjuna, being questioned, ' What is Your intention in assuming a terrible form when revealing Your cosmic sovereignty out of overflowing love for Your proteges?' --- He spoke to the following effect: The manifestation of a terrible form by Me is to point out that I Myself am operative for the annihilation of the entire world of kings headed by the sons of Dhrtarastra, without any effort on your (Arjuna' s) part. Reminding Arjuna of this, is to goad him to fight:

11.32 The Lord said -- Kala (Time) is the calculator which calculates (Kalayati). Calculating the end of the lives of all those under the leadership of Dhrtarastra' s sons, I am causing their destruction. Fully manifesting Myself with this fierce form, I have begun to destroy the hosts of kings. Therefore, by My will, even without you, namely, even without your effort, all these hostile warriors under the leadership of Dhrtarastra' s sons, shall cease to be, i.e., will be destroyed.

11.33 Therefore, arise for fighting against them. Conquering your enemies, win glory and enjoy a prosperous and righteous kingdom. All those who have sinned have been already annihilated by Me. e you merely an instrument (Nimitta) of Mine in destroying them --- just like a weapon in my hand, O Savyasacin! The root ' Sac' means ' fastening' . A ' savyasacin' is one who is capable of fixing or fastening the arrow even with his left hand. The meaning is that he is so dexterous that he can fight with a bow in each hand.

11.34 Say Drona, hisma, Karna, etc., who have ben chosen for destruction by me alone, as they have transgressed the law of righteousness. e not distressed, considering, ' How can I slay these teachers, relations and others who are attached to enjoyments?' Do not be thus distressed by thinking about the right and wrong of it, or out of love and compassion for them. These persons are guilty of unrighteousness by siding with the evil-minded Duryodhana. They have been chosen by Me alone for destruction. Therefore fight without doubt. You shall conqer your enemies in battle. In slaying them, there is not the slighest trace of cruelty. The purport is that victory is the sure

result.

11.35 Sanjaya said -- Having heard the speech of Krsna, ocean of affection for the seekers of refuge in Him, Arjuna did obeisance to Him. Trembling with fear, he bowed again and again before Him. With folded palms, and trembling, Arjuna spoke in a choked voice with emotion.

11.36 Arjuna said: -- ' Sthane' means rightly or it is but proper. It is but proper that the whole world of gods, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Yaksas, Kinnaras, Kimpurusas, etc., who have foregathered with a desire to see the battle, should be delighted with You and love You after beholding You by Your grace. You are the Lord of all. Rightly after beholding You, the Raksasas flee in fear on all sides, and rightly all the host of Siddhas, namely, the host of Siddhas who are favourable to You, pay their homage to You. The connection with what was said earlier is that all this is as it ought to be. He further proceeds to explain how all this is right:

11.37 O Mahatman, for what reason should rahma and others not bow down to You, who are great and are the First eing and the Creator even of rahma, namely, Hiranyagarbha? O Infinite, O Lord of the gods, O You who have the universe for Your abode! You are the ' Aksara' . What does not perish, is the Aksara, here, the ' principle of individual self' ; for the individual self does not perish as established in Sruti passages: ' The intelligent self is not born, nor dies' (Ka. U., 1.2.18). You alone are the ' existent and the non-existent,' the principle of Prakrti, in its condition as effect and in its condition as cause. This is denoted by the terms ' Sat' (existent) and ' Asat' (non-existent). You alone are the state of effect denoted by the term ' Sat' , which is the state of diversification by names and forms, and also the state of cause, denoted by the tetm ' Asat' , which is the state incapable of such divisions and diversities. ' What is beyond both' --- what is beyond Prakrti and the individual self associated with the Prakrti, as also from the principle of liberated selves who are different from those associated with Prakrti, i.e., bound souls. You alone are that also. Therefore:

11.38 You alone are all the knowers and all that must be known. You alone, abiding thus as the Self of all, are the ' Dhaman' (abode), namely, the goal to be attained. y You, O infinite of form, is the universe pervaded. y You the universe, composed of conscient beings and non-conscient matter, is ' Tatam' , pervaded. You are the Primal God, the Ancient Person. You are the supreme resting place of the universe. The meaning is that You are the supreme foundation of the universe which constitutes Your body, as You are its Self. [It is to be noted how Ramanuja derives here the meaning of ' individual self' for the word Aksara, which helps him to explain ' Kutasth' oksara ucchyate' in 15.16] Arjuna says: ' Therefore You alone are expressed by the terms Vayu etc.'

11.39 You alone are the great-grandsire of all and also grandfather etc. The Prajapatis are the fathers of all creatures. Hiranyagarbha (rahma), the father of the Prajapatis, is the grandsire of all creatures. You, being the father of even Hiranyagarbha, are great grandfather of all creatures. You alone are denoted by the several terms by which these beings are known. Such is the meaning. eholding the Lord in a most marvellous form, Arjuna, bent with great awe, saluted Him from all sides with his eyes widely open from joy.

11.40 You, of infinite prowess and measureless heroic action, pervade all beings as their very Self and therefore, are, in reality all of them. Terms, naming all other entities, are truly naming You; for they, both sentient as well as non-sentient, constitute Your body, and as such are just Your modes. Therefore You alone, having them all as Your modes, are signified by all terms standing for them. In the texts, ' O by You of infinite form, is the cosmos pervaded' (11.38) and ' You pervade all, and hence are all' (11.40), it is clearly stated that the pervasion as the Self is the only rationale for speaking of them as one with You, in the sense of co-ordinate predication as in the text, ' You are the imperishable and also being and non-being' (11.37) and ' You are Vayu, Yama and Agni' (11.39).

11.41 - 11.42 Infinite power, boundless valour, being the Inner Self of everything, being the creator etc., these constitute Your majesty. eing ignorant

of this, and considering You only as a friend, and out of consequent love, or negligence born of life-long familiarity, whatever has been said rudely, without showing courtesy, such as ' O Krsna, O Yadava, O Comrade' ; and whatever disrespect has been shown to You in jest, while playing or resting, while sitting or eating, while alone or in the sight of others --- for all these I beseech forgiveness of You who are in incomprehensible.

11.41 - 11.42 Infinite power, boundless valour, being the Inner Self of everything, being the creator etc., these constitute Your majesty. eing ignorant of this, and considering You only as a friend, and out of consequent love, or negligence born of life-long familiarity, whatever has been said rudely, without showing courtesy, such as ' O Krsna, O Yadava, O Comrade' ; and whatever disrespect has been shown to You in jest, while playing or resting, while sitting or eating, while alone or in the sight of others --- for all these I beseech forgiveness of You who are in incomprehensible.

11.43 O eing of matchless greatness! You are the father of this world, of all that moves and does not move. You are the teacher of this world. Therefore You are the one most worthy of reverence in this world of mobile and immobile entities. There is none equal to You. How then could there be in the three worlds another greater than You? No other being is equal to You in point of any attribute like compassion etc. How could there be any one greater? Inasmuch as You are the father of all, the most worthy of reverence, teacher and exalted over all by virtue of attributes like compassion etc.,

11.44 Therefore, bowing down and prostrating, I implore You, O adorable Lord, for Your mercy. Just as, when entreated with salutation, a father will show mercy to his son, or a friend to a friend, even if he has been at fault, even so it is meet that You, most compassionate and dear to me, should bear with me, who is dear to You in all respects.

11.45 Seeing Your form, never seen before, extremely marvellous and awe-inspiring, I am delighted, transported with love. ut my mind is also troubled with awe. Hence reveal to me only Your most gracious form. e gracious, O Lord of

all gods! O Abode of the universe! Show me that form, O gracious Lord of all the gods headed by rahma, and the foundation of the entire universe!

11.46 I wish to see You thus, as before, with a crown, and with a mace and discus in hand. Hence assume again that four-armed shape, shown to me before, O thousand-armed one of Universal Form! Assume that shape in place of what You have now revealed with thousand arms and a cosmic body. Such is the meaning.

11.47 The Lord said -- The ' luminous' form of Mine is a mass of luminosity. It is ' universal' i.e., constitutes the Self of the universe. It is ' infinite' , endless. This is illustrated by describing it as having no beginning, middle or end. It is ' primeval,' namely, it constitutes the foundation of all beings other than Myself. It has nevr been seen before by any one other than you. Such a form is now revealed to you, who are My devotee, by Me who am gracious, by My own Yoga, namely, by the power of willing the truth associated with Me. Sri Krsna proceeds to say, ' It is not possible that I can be realised as I am, through any means except exclusive hakti.'

11.48 In this form, which represents My real nature, I cannot be realised by such means as study of the Vedas, sacrifices etc., by anyone who is bereft of exclusive hakti towards Me or by any one other than yourself who has complete devotion towards Me.

11.49 Whatever fear and whatever perlexity have been caused to you by seeing My terrible form, may it cease now. I shall show you the benign form to which you were accustomed before. ehold now that form of Mine.

11.50 Sanjaya said -- Having spoken thus to Arjuna, the Lord, the son of Vasudeva, revealed His own four-armed form. And the Mahatman, i.e., one whose resolves are always treu, reassured him who was terror-stricken on seeing ann unfamiliar form, by resuming the familiar pleasant form. Possession of His own four-armed form alone is proper to this Lord of all, the Supreme Person, the Supreme rahman, when he has assumed the human

form for blessing this world as the son of Vasudeva. ut in answer to the prayer of Vasudeva, who was terrified by Kamsa, the two extra arms were withdrawn till the destruction of Kamsa. These became manifest again. For He was prayed to thus: ' You are born, O Lord, O Lord of gods, withdraw this form bearing conch, discus and mace out of grace ... withdraw this form of four arms, O Self of all' (V. P., 5.3.10 and 13). Even to Sisupala, who hated Him, this form of four arms of Sri Krsna was the object of constant thought, as described in: ' Him who is of four long and robust arms, bearing the conch, discus and the mace' (V. P., 4.15.10). Hence Arjuna also exclaimed here; ' Assume again that four-armed shape' (11.46).

11.51 Arjuna said -- Having beheld this pleasing and unique form of Yours, human in configuration, endowed with grace, tenderness, beauty etc., the excellence of which is infinite, I have now become composed, and I am restored to my normal nature.

11.52 The Lord said -- This form of Mine which you have seen, and which has the whole universe under control, which is the foundation of all and which forms the origin of all --- this cannot be beheld by any one. Even the gods ever long to see this form; but they have not seen it. Why? Sri Krsna says:

11.53 - 11.54 Sri Krsna says -- y Vedas, i.e., by mere study, teaching etc., of these sacred texts, it is not possible to know Me truly. It is also not possible through meditation, sacrifices, gifts and austerities, destitute of devotion towards Me. ut by single-minded devotion i.e., by devotion characterised by extreme ardour and intensity, it is possible to know Me in reality through scriptures, to behold Me directly in reality, and enter into Me in reality. So describes a Sruti passage: ' This Self cannot be obtained by instruction, nor by intellect nor by much hearing. Whomsoever He chooses, by him alone is He obtained. To such a one He reveals His own form' (Ka. U., 2.2.23) and (Mun. U., 3.2.3).

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11.55 Whosoever performs all acts like the study of the Vedas described above, considering them as several modes of worship, ' he works for Me.' He who ' looks upon Me as the highest,' namely, one to whom I alone am the highest purpose in all his enterprises, has Me as ' the highest end.' He who is ' devoted to me,' i.e., is greatly devoted to me and hence unable to sustain himself without reciting My names, praising Me, meditating upon Me, worshipping Me, saluting Me etc., he who performs these always considering Me as the supreme end --- he is My devotee. He is ' free from attachments,' as he is attached to me alone, and is therefore unable to have attachment to any other entity. He who is without hatred towards any being, is one who fulfils all the following conditions: his nature is to feel pleasure or pain solely on account of his union or separation from Me; he considers his own sins to be the cause of his sufferings (and not the work of others); he is confirmed in his faith that all beings are dependent on the Parama-purusa. For all these reasons he has no hatred for any one.

BHAGAVADGITA

English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda

Chapter 12

12.1 Arjuna said -- These are two types of spiritual aspirants who are contrasted thus: (1) On the one hand there are those devotees who adore You ' thus' ; namely, in the way taught in such text as ' Whosoever works for Me' (11.55), and who are desirous of being ever ' integrated' with You, namely, considering You as the supreme end. They adore You in utter devotion --- You, the ocean of boundless attributes of limitless excellence like grace, affability, omniscience, true resolve etc., and endowed with all glory. (2) On the other hand there are those who meditate on the ' Imperishable' , (Aksara) namely, the individual self in Its true nature, which is the same as the ' Unmanifest' (Avyakta), namely that whose nature cannot be grasped by organs such as the eye etc. The question posed is: Which of these two classes of devotees have greater knowledge of Yoga? Who would reach their respective goals sooner? Such is the meaning of the question. Sri Krsna clearly states later on, ' O Arjuna, I become before long their redeemer from the fatal sea of recurring births and deaths' (12.7), with reference to the speed with which the latter kind of devotees reach Him.

12.2 The Lord said -- I consider them to be the highest among the Yogins (i.e., among those striving for realisation) --- them who worship Me focusing their minds upon Me as one exceedingly dear to them, who are endowed with supreme faith, and who are ever ' integrated' with Me, namely ever desirous of constant union with Me. Those who thus worship Me, focusing their minds on Me as their supreme goal, attain Me soon and easily. Such is the meaning.

12.3 - 12.5 The individual self meditated upon by those who follow the path of the ' Aksara' (the Imperishable) is thus described: It cannot be ' defined' in terms indicated by expressions like gods and men etc., for It is different from the body; It is ' imperceptible' through the senses such as eyes; It is ' omnipresent and unthinkable,' for though It exists everywhere in bodies such as those of gods and others, It cannot be conceived in terms of those bodies,

as It is an entity of an altogether different kind; It is ' common to all beings' i.e., alike in all beings but different from the bodily forms distinguishing them; It is ' immovable' as It does not move out of Its unique nature, being unmodifiable, and therefore eternal. Such aspirants are further described as those who, ' subduing their senses' like the eye from their natural operations, look upon all beings of different forms as ' equal' by virtue of their knowledge of the sameness of the nature of the selves as knowers in all. Therefore they are not given ' to take pleasure in the misfortune of others,' as such feelings proceed from one' s identification with one' s own special bodily form. Those who meditate on the Imperishable Principle (individual self) in this way, even they come to Me. It means that they also realise their essential self, which, in respect of freedom from Samsara, is like My own Self. So Sri Krsna will declare later on: ' Partaking of My nature' (14.2). Also the Sruti says: ' Untainted, he attains supreme equality' (Mun. U., 3.1.3). Likewise He will declare the Supreme rahman as being distinct from the freed self which is without modification and is denoted by the term ' Imperishable' (Aksara), and is described as unchanging (Kutastha). ' The Highest Person is other than this Imperishable' (15.16 - 17). ut in the teaching in Aksara-vidya ' Now that higher science by which that Aksara is known' (Mun. U., 1.5) the entity that is designated by the term Aksara is Supreme rahman Himself; for He is the source of all beings, etc. Greater is the difficulty of those whose minds are attached to the unmanifest. The path of the unmanifest is a psychosis of the mind with the unmanifest as its object. It is accomplished with difficulty by embodied beings, who have misconceived the body as the self. For, embodied beings mistake the body for the self. The superiority of those who adore the Supreme eing is now stated clearly:

12.3 - 12.5 The individual self meditated upon by those who follow the path of the ' Aksara' (the Imperishable) is thus described: It cannot be ' defined' in terms indicated by expressions like gods and men etc., for It is different from the body; It is ' imperceptible' through the senses such as eyes; It is ' omnipresent and unthinkable,' for though It exists everywhere in bodies such as those of gods and others, It cannot be conceived in terms of those bodies, as It is an entity of an altogether different kind; It is ' common to all beings' i.e.,

alike in all beings but different from the bodily forms distinguishing them; It is 'immovable' as It does not move out of Its unique nature, being unmodifiable, and therefore eternal. Such aspirants are further described as those who, 'subduing their senses' like the eye from their natural operations, look upon all beings of different forms as 'equal' by virtue of their knowledge of the sameness of the nature of the selves as knowers in all. Therefore they are not given 'to take pleasure in the misfortune of others,' as such feelings proceed from one's identification with one's own special bodily form. Those who meditate on the Imperishable Principle (individual self) in this way, even they come to Me. It means that they also realise their essential self, which, in respect of freedom from Samsara, is like My own Self. So Sri Krsna will declare later on: 'Partaking of My nature' (14.2). Also the Sruti says: 'Untainted, he attains supreme equality' (Mun. U., 3.1.3). Likewise He will declare the Supreme rahman as being distinct from the freed self which is without modification and is denoted by the term 'Imperishable' (Aksara), and is described as unchanging (Kutastha). 'The Highest Person is other than this Imperishable' (15.16 - 17). But in the teaching in Aksara-vidya 'Now that higher science by which that Aksara is known' (Mun. U., 1.5) the entity that is designated by the term Aksara is Supreme Brahman Himself; for He is the source of all beings, etc. Greater is the difficulty of those whose minds are attached to the unmanifest. The path of the unmanifest is a psychosis of the mind with the unmanifest as its object. It is accomplished with difficulty by embodied beings, who have misconceived the body as the self. For, embodied beings mistake the body for the self. The superiority of those who adore the Supreme being is now stated clearly:

12.3 - 12.5 The individual self meditated upon by those who follow the path of the 'Aksara' (the Imperishable) is thus described: It cannot be 'defined' in terms indicated by expressions like gods and men etc., for It is different from the body; It is 'imperceptible' through the senses such as eyes; It is 'omnipresent and unthinkable,' for though It exists everywhere in bodies such as those of gods and others, It cannot be conceived in terms of those bodies, as It is an entity of an altogether different kind; It is 'common to all beings' i.e., alike in all beings but different from the bodily forms distinguishing them; It is

' immovable' as It does not move out of Its unique nature, being unmodifiable, and therefore eternal. Such aspirants are further described as those who, ' subduing their senses' like the eye from their natural operations, look upon all beings of different forms as ' equal' by virtue of their knowledge of the sameness of the nature of the selves as knowers in all. Therefore they are not given ' to take pleasure in the misfortune of others,' as such feelings proceed from one' s identification with one' s own special bodily form. Those who meditate on the Imperishable Principle (individual self) in this way, even they come to Me. It means that they also realise their essential self, which, in respect of freedom from Samsara, is like My own Self. So Sri Krsna will declare later on: ' Partaking of My nature' (14.2). Also the Sruti says: ' Untainted, he attains supreme equality' (Mun. U., 3.1.3). Likewise He will declare the Supreme rahman as being distinct from the freed self which is without modification and is denoted by the term ' Imperishable' (Aksara), and is described as unchanging (Kutastha). ' The Highest Person is other than this Imperishable' (15.16 - 17). ut in the teaching in Aksara-vidya ' Now that higher science by which that Aksara is known' (Mun. U., 1.5) the entity that is designated by the term Aksara is Supreme rahman Himself; for He is the source of all beings, etc. Greater is the difficulty of those whose minds are attached to the unmanifest. The path of the unmanifest is a psychosis of the mind with the unmanifest as its object. It is accomplished with difficulty by embodied beings, who have misconceived the body as the self. For, embodied beings mistake the body for the self. The superiority of those who adore the Supreme eing is now stated clearly:

12.6 - 12.7 ut those who, with a mind ' focused on Me,' the Supreme Self, and ' intent upon Me,' namely, holding Me as their sole object, dedicating to Me all their actions --- i.e., including all worldly actions like eating which are meant for supporting the body, as also Vedic rites like sacrifices, gifts, fire-offerings, austerities etc., generally done by worldly-minded people for other purposes --- worship Me and meditate on Me with exclusive devotion, namely, with devotion without any other purpose, adoring Me by all such acts as meditation, worship, prostration, praises and hymns which are by themselves exceedingly dear to them and are equal to the end itself --- to these I become soon their

saviour from the sea of Samsara which, on account of its being antagonistic to the attainment of Myself, is deadly.

12.6 - 12.7 ut those who, with a mind ' focused on Me,' the Supreme Self, and ' intent upon Me,' namely, holding Me as their sole object, dedicating to Me all their actions --- i.e., including all worldly actions like eating which are meant for supporting the body, as also Vedic rites like sacrifices, gifts, fire-offerings, austerities etc., generally done by worldly-minded people for other purposes --- worship Me and meditate on Me with exclusive devotion, namely, with devotion without any other purpose, adoring Me by all such acts as meditation, worship, prostration, praises and hymns which are by themselves exceedingly dear to them and are equal to the end itself --- to these I become soon their saviour from the sea of Samsara which, on account of its being antagonistic to the attainment of Myself, is deadly.

12.8 ' Focus your mind on Me alone,' on account of My being the unsurpassed end of human endeavour and on My being easily attainable without delay. Focus your mind in meditation on Me alone. Let your uddhi ' enter into Me,' strengthened by the conviction that I alone am the supreme object to be attained. Then you will ' live in Me alone,' i.e., You will live in Me alone immediately after focusing your mind on Me by forming the conviction that I alone am the supreme object to be attained.

12.9 Now, if you are unable to focus your mind immediately on Me in deep meditation, then seek to reach Me by the ' practice of repetition (Abhyasa Yoga)' . y the repeated practice of remembrance full of immense love, concentrate your mind on Me the ocean of manifold attributes innate to Me like, beauty, affability, friendliness, affection, compassion, sweetness, majesty, magnanimity, heroism, valour, might, omniscience, freedom from wants, unfailing resolves, sovereignty over all, being the cause of all etc., and being antagonistic to all that is evil. All these attributes are of unlimited excellence in the Supreme Person.

12.10 If you are incapable of practising remembrance in the above manner, then devote yourself to ' My deeds.' Such devotional acts consist in the construction of temples, laying out temple gardens, lighting up lamps therein, sweeping, sprinkling water and plastering the floor of holy shrines, gathering flowers, engaging in My worship, chanting My names, circumambulating My temples, praising Me, prostrating before Me etc. Do these with great affection. Even performing such works which are exceedingly dear to Me, you will, before long, get your mind steadily focused on Me as through the practice of repetitions, and will gain perfection through attaining Me.

12.11 If you are unable to do even this ' taking refuge in My Yoga,' i.e., if you are unable even to do actions for My sake, which forms the sprout of hakti Yoga, wherein through meditation I am made the exclusive and sole object of love --- then you should resort to Aksara Yoga described in the first six chapters. It consists in contemplation on the nature of the individual self. This engenders devotion to the Lord. As a means for practice of this (Aksara Yoga), renounce the fruit of every action. The state of mind that holds Me as the only worthy object of attainment and love arises only when all the sins of an aspirant are destroyed without exception. ' One with a controlled mind' means one with the mind subdued. When the individual self is visualised to be of the nature of a Sesa (subsidiary) to the Lord, and when the veil of nescience consisting in identifying the self with the body is removed by contemplation on the self generated through the performance of works without attachment to the fruits and with My propitiation as the sole objective --- then supreme hakti to Me will originate by itself. [The point driven home is this: It is nescience that stands between the Jiva and the Lord. This nescience consists in identification of the self with the body. It is through works done without an eye on their fruits but exclusively as an offering to the Lord, that this nescience is removed. Thus Karma Yoga is the sprout of self-realisation, and of hakti. On the nescience being removed, the knowledge that one (i.e., the Jiva) is a Sesa (an absolutely dependent liege) of the Lord, dawns on the Jiva. Such knowledge generates exclusive devotion or hakti accompanied by Prapatti. Or if the Jiva gets immersed in Its own bliss, It will attain Kaivalya.] In the same manner, Sri Krsna will further show in the text beginning with ' y worshipping Him with his

work will a man reach perfection' (18.46) and ending with ' Forsaking the feeling of I and with no feeling of mine and tranquil, one becomes worthy of the state of rahman. Having realised the state of rahman, tranquil, he neither grieves nor craves. Regarding all beings alike, he attains supreme devotion to Me' (18.53-54).

12.12 More than the practice of remembrance (of the Lord), which is difficult in the absence of love for the Lord, the direct knowledge of the self, arising from the contemplation of the imperishable self (Aksara), is conducive to the well-being of the self. etter than the imperfect knowledge of the self, is perfect meditation on the self, as it is more conducive to the well-being of the self. More conducive than imperfect meditation (i.e., meditation unaccompanied with renunciation), is the activity performed with renunciation of the fruits. It is only after the annihilation of sins, through the performance of works accompanied by renounciation of fruits, that peace of mind is attained. When the mind is at peace, perfect meditation on the self is possible. From meditation results the direct realisation of the self. From the direct realisation of the self results supreme devotion. It is in this way that Atmanistha or devotion to the individual self becomes useful for a person who is incapable of practising loving devotion to the Supreme eing. And for one practising the discipline for attaining the self (Jnana Yoga) without acquisition of perfect tranquillity of mind, disinterested activity (Karma Yoga), including in it meditation on the self, is the better path for the knowledge of the self. [Thus the steps are performance of works without desire for fruits, equanimity of mind, meditation on the self, self-realisation, and devotion to the Lord.] Now Sri Krsna enumerates the attributes required of one intent on performance of disinterested activity:

12.13 - 12.14 In these and succeeding verses the Lord mentions the nature of the Karma Yogi who adores Him through his works. In other words the hakti element in Karma Yoga is emphasised. He never hates any being even though they hate him and do him wrong. For he thinks that the Lord impels these beings to hate him and do him wrong for atoning for his transgressions. He is ' friendly' , evincing a friendly disposition towards all beings whether they hate

him or do him wrong. He is ' compassionate' , evincing compassion towards their sufferings. He is free from the ' feeling of mine,' i.e., he is not possessive with regard to his body, senses and all things associated with them. He is free from the feeling of ' I' , i.e., is free from the delusion that his body is the self. Therefore, ' pain and pleasure are the same to him,' i.e., he is free from distress and delight resulting from pain and pleasure arising from his deeds. He is ' enduring' , unaffected even by those two (i.e., pleasure and pain) due to the inevitable contact of sense-objects. He is ' content' , namely, satisfied with whatever chance may bring him for the sustenance of his body. He ' ever meditates,' i.e., is constantly intent on contemplating on the self as separate from the body. He is ' self-restrained' , namely, he controls the activities of his mind. He is of ' firm conviction' regarding the meanings taught in the science of the self. His ' mind and reason are dedicated to Me' i.e., his mind and reason are dedicated to Me in the form ' hagavan Vasudeva alone is propitiated by disinterested activities, and when duly propitiated, He wil bring about for me the direct vision of the self.' Such a devotee of mine, i.e., who works in this manner as a Karma Yogin, is dear to Me.

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from the body. He is ' self-restrained' , namely, he controls the activities of his mind. He is of ' firm conviction'   regarding the meanings taught in the science of the self. His ' mind and reason are dedicated to Me'   i.e., his mind and reason are dedicated to Me in the form ' hagavan Vasudeva alone is propitiated by disinterested activities, and when duly propitiated, He wil bring about for me the direct vision of the self.'   Such a devotee of mine, i.e., who works in this manner as a Karma Yogin, is dear to Me.

12.15 That person who is engaged in Karma Yoga does not become the cause of ' fear to the world' ; he does nothing to cause fear to the world. He has no cause to ' fear the world,'   i.e., no action on the part of others can cause him fear because of the certainty that he is not inimical to the world. Therefore he is not in the habit of showing favour towards someone and intolerance towards others; he has no fear of some or repulsion for others. Such a person is dear to Me.

12.16 He who is free from ' desires' , i.e., who has no longing for anything except the self; who is ' pure' , namely, whose body is nourished on the food prescribed by the Sastras; who is an ' expert'   namely, who is an expert in performing actions prescribed by the Sastras; who is ' indifferent' , i.e., not interested in matters other than those enjoined by the Sastras; who is free from ' agony' , i.e., of pain caused by heat, cold, contact with coarse things etc., which are inevitably associated with the performance of rites prescribed by the Sastras; who renounces all ' undertakings,'   i.e., who renounces all undertakings except those demanded by the Sastras --- the devotee who is like this is dear to Me.

12.17 He who does not ' rejoice' , i.e., that Karma Yogin, who, on obtaining things which cause joy to man, does not rejoice; who does not ' hate' , does not hate on obtaining anything undesriable; who is not ' grieved'   by common sorrows which cause grief among men, as the loss of wife, son, fortune etc.; who ' does not desire'   anything like wife, son, fortune etc.; not already acquired by him; who ' renounces good and evil,'   i.e., who renounces both merit and demerit because, like demert, merit also causes bondage, there being no

difference between them in this respect --- he who is like this and devoted to Me is dear to Me.

12.18 - 12.19 The absence of hate etc., towards foes, friends etc., has already been taught in the stanza beginning with, ' He who never hates any being' (11.13). What is now taught is that equanimity to be practised even when such persons mentioned above are present before one who is superior to those having a general equanimous temperament referred to earlier. Who has no ' home' , namely, who is not attached to home, etc., as he possesses firmness of mind with regard to the self. ecause of this, he is ' same even in honour and dishonour.'   He who is devoted to Me and who is like this --- he is dear to Me. Showing the superiority of hakti-Nistha over Atma-nistha, Sri Krsna now concludes in accordance with what is stated at the beginning of this chapter in Verse 2.

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12.20 But those who follow Bhakti Yoga --- ' which is a nectar of virtuous duty,' i.e., which is at once virtuous duty and nectar, and which even as a means, is equal to its end in conferring bliss on those who follow is as stated above, i.e., in the manner taught in the stanza beginning with ' Those who, focusing their minds on Me'   (12.2) --- such devotees are exceedingly dear to Me.

BHAGAVADGITA
English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda
Chapter 13

13.1 No commentary.

13.2 The body which is cognised in identity with the experiencing self by co-ordinate predication (Samanadhikaranya) in the propositions, ' I am a god, ' I am a man,' ' I am fat,' ' I am slender' etc., is described by those who know the real nature of the body as only the Field (Ksetra) of experience for the experiencing self, who is distinct from the body. Those who know this, namely, those who know the exact nature of the self, call It the Field-knower (Ksetrajna). That knower who knows the body, as divided into its different members and as their collectivity, can say ' I know it, the body, as an object.' The person with this perception is the one who is called the Ksetrajna or the Field-knower, who must necessarily be different from the Field (Ksetra), which is the object of this knowledge. It is true that at the time of perceiving an object like a pot which is different from one' s body, the seer who thinks ' I am a god who sees it' or ' I am a man who sees it' etc., is putting himself as identical with the body through co-ordinate predication. In the same way he experiences the body as an object of knowledge when he says ' I know this body.' Thus if the body is an object of knowledge, it must be different from the knowing self. Therefore, the Field-knower (Ksetrajna). The knower, is other than the body which is an object of knowledge like a jar, etc. ut this knowledge which arises by way of co-ordinate predication is justified on the ground that the body is inseparable from oneself; for it constitutes an attribute of the self like ' cow-ness' of the cow etc. The knowing self is however unique in being an eternal and subtle form of knowledge. ut this is inaccessible to the ordinary man' s organs of vision; it is accessible only to a mind refined by Yoga. The ignorant see the knower only in the form of Prakrti because of close proximity to or union with Prakrti. Sri Krsna thus declares later on: ' When in identiciation with the Gunas he departs or stays or experiences, the deluded perceive him not. They, who have the eye of knowledge, see' (15.10).

13.3 Know as Myself the Field-knower also who is the only form of the Knower in all the bodies like divinities, men etc., i.e., know them as ensouled by Me. y the expression ' also' (Api) in, ' Know Me also (Api) as the Field-Knower,' it is inferable that ' Know Me as the Field-Knower in all Fields' has also been taught by implication. Just as the body, on account of its being the attribute of the knower, cannot exist separately, and is consequently denoted by way of co-ordinate predication (Samanadhikarnya) with it, in the same manner both the Field and the Field-Knower, on account of their being My attributes, cannot exist as entities separate from Me, and hence can be denoted as ' one with Me' by way of co-ordinate predication. oth the Ksetra (Field) which is an aggregate of earth etc., and the Ksetrajna (the Jiva) have the Lord for their Self, because of their being of the nature of the body of the Lord. Such is the teaching of the Sruti passages beginning from ' He who dwelling in the earth, is within the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body is the earth, who controls the earth from within --- He is your inner Controller and immortal Self' (r. U., 3.7.3), and ending with ' He who, dwelling in the individual self as the self within, whom the self does not know, whose body the self is, who controls the self from within --- He is your inner Controller and immortal Self' (r. U. Madh., 3.7.22). It is the dwelling in of the Lord as the Self of all the knowers of the bodies (Field-Knowers or the Jivas) on account of His being the inner Controller, that is the justification for describing Him as in co-ordinate predication (Samanadhikaranya) with them. In the beginning and later on, it was taught to the effect, ' I am the self, O Arjuna, dwelling in the hearts of all beings' (10.20), and ' Nothing that moves or does not move exists without Me' (10.39) and ' I, with a single aspect of Myself, am sustaining the whole universe' (10.42). In the middle He describes Himself by way of co-ordinate predication as, ' Of Adityas, I am Visnu' etc. In the teachings concerning the difference between the body and its knower and concerning both of them as having Me for their Self --- this knowledge of unity by co-ordinate predication alone is taught as ' My view.' Some (the followers of Advaita and hedabheda) say: The sentence ' And know Me as the Knower' should be understood as co-ordinate predication expressing identity between the individual self and the Supreme Self. Thus according to their view, the Lord (Isvara), who is Existence-Knowledge-liss Absolute must be admitted to have become the

individual self, as it were, through nescience (Ajnana). According to their docrine the teaching of identity given here in the Text seeks to sublate that nescience. Just as teaching by a reliable person to the effect, ' This is a rope, and not a snake,' sublates the erroneous notion of a snake, the teaching of the Lord, who is most reliable, sublates the erroneous notion of the individual self (Ksetrjna) being different from Him. Such interpreters are to be questioned thus: Is this Teacher, hagavan Vasudeva, the Supreme Ruler, one whose nescience has been sublated by the exact knowledge of the Self or not? If His nescience has been sublated, then the perception of duality like Arjuna as the taught, and of actions like teaching, becomes impossible, because of the impossibility of superimposing a flase form on the Self which is in reality mere undifferentiated Consciousness. If, however, His nescience has not been sublated on account of His not having realised the Self, then, because of His ignorance, it is utterly impossible for Him to teach the knowledge of the Self. Elsewhere it has been stated: ' The wise, who have realised the truth, will instruct you in knowledge' (4.34). Thus, the polemics of this nature are to be ignored as having been set forth to misguide the world by these ignorant debaters whose arguments are contradicted by all Vedas, Smrtis, Itihasas, the Puranas, logic and their own words. The truth is this: Some of the Sruti texts declare that non-conscient matter, the conscient entity (the individual self) and the Supreme rahman are different in nature from one another in the relation of object of enjoyment, the enjoyer (subject) and the Supreme Ruler as follows: ' From Prakrti, the Possessor of Maya projects this world, in which another (i.e. the individual self) is confined by Maya (Sve. U., 4.9); ' Know then Maya to be the Prakrti and the Possessor of Maya to be the Great Lord' (Sve. U., 4.10); ' The perishable is Prakrti; the immortal and imperishable is Hara (the individual self); and the Lord alone rules over both the perishable Prakrti and the imperishable individual self' (Sve. U., 1.10). Here, the expression, ' The immortal and the imperishable is Hara,' points out the enjoyer (i.e., individual self); It is called Hara because the individual self siezes matter as an object of It own experience. Again, ' He is the cause, the Lord of the lord of senses' (Ibid., 6.9); ' He has no progenitor and no Lord' (Ibid., 6.9); ' He is the ruler of Prakrti, of the individual self, and the Lord of qualities' (Ibid., 6.16); ' He is the Lord of the Universe, the Ruler of individual selves, the eternal, the auspicious

and the unchanging' (Ma. Na., 13.3); ' The two unborn --- the knowing Lord and the unknowing individual self, the omnipotent and the impotent' (Sve. U.,1.9); ' The Constant among inconstants, the Intelligent among the intelligents, the one who grants the desires of the many' (Ibid., 6.13. & Ka. U., 5.13); ' When one knows the enjoyer, the object of enjoyment and Actuater ...' (Sve. U., 1.12); ' Regarding the individual self and the Actuater to be different, and blessed by Him, It attains immortality' (Ibid., 1.6), and ' Ot these two, the one eats the sweet Pippala fruit, the other shines in his splendour without eating' (Ibid., 4.6 and Mun. U., 3.1.1). Further, ' There is one unborn female, red, white and black, who produces many creatures like herself; there is another unborn being who loves her and is close to her; there is yet another male unborn who after having enjoyed here, gives her up' (Ibid., 4.5); ' The cow (i.e. Prakrti) that has no beginning or end, is the mother and source of all beings' (Cha. U., 4.5) and ' On the self-same tree, the individual self sits sunken in grief, and being ignorant and impotent, It grieves. When It sees the other, the gracious Lord and His glory, It attains freedom from grief (Sve. U., 4.7). The following passages of the Gita are alos to the point: ' This Prakrti, thus divided eightfold, composed of Ahankara etc., is Mine.' ' This is My lower Prakrti. Know My higher Prakrti to be distinct from this --- the Life Principle, by which the universe is sustained (7.4-5); ' All beings, O Arjuna, enter into My Nature at the end of a cycle. These I send forth again at the beginning of a cycle. Resorting to Prakrti, which is My own, I send forth again and again all this multitude of beings, helpless under the sway of Prakrti' (9.7-8); ' Under my control, Prakrti gives birth to all that moves, and that which does not move. And because of this, O Arjuna, does the world spin' (9.10); ' Know that Prakrti and the individual self are without beginning' (13.19) ' The great rahman (or Prakrti) is My womb; in that I lay the germ; from it, O Arjuna, is the birth of all beings' (14.3). The great rahman of Mine, which is the womb of this world, called Prakti, non-conscient matter, consisting of elements in a subtle state --- in it I lay the germ called conscient entity. From that, namely, from the compound between conscient and unconscient entities, which is willed by Me, are born all these beings beginning with the gods and ending with the immobile things mixed up with the unconscient matter. Such is the meaning. In the Sruti also, the subtle original state of material elements is signified as rahman: ' From Him are

produced rahman as also the world of matter and soul (Anna) having name and form' (Mun. U., 1.1.9). Likewise, Sruti Texts declare that the Supreme Person constitutes the Self of all, and the conscient and non-conscient entities are inseparable from Him; for, those conscient and unconscient entities, which abide in the form of the experiencer and the experienced abiding in all states, form the body of the Supreme Person; consequently they are under His control. These Texts are as follows: ' He who, dwelling in the earth, is within the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body the earth is, who is the Inner Ruler of the earth' and ending with, ' He who, dwelling in the self, is within the self, whom the self does not know, whose body the self is and who is the Inner Controller of the self' (r. U. Madh., 3.7.3-22). Likewise another passage declares: ' He who is moving withing the earth, to whom the earth is the body, whom the earth does not know ... he who is moving within the Mrtyu (Nature), to whom Mrtyu is the body, whom Mrtyu does not know ... He is the Inner Self of all beings, sinless; He is the divine Lord, He is of the one Narayana' (Sub. U., 7). Here the term Mrtyu denotes the subtle state of non-conscient entity which is expressed by the term Tamas, because in the same Upanisad, it is declared, ' The unmanifest (Avyakta) merges into Aksara (the imperishable), and the Aksara merges into Tamas (Ibid., 2). Elsewhere it is stated thus: ' Entering within, is the Ruler of all creatures, the self of all (Tai. A., 3.21). Therefore, the Supreme Person, who posseses conscient and non-conscient entities abiding in all states as His body, is in the form of the world, whether in the state of cause or of effect. So, with the purpose of making this explicit, some Srutis declare that the world in its states as cause and effect, is He Himself. They begin with, ' This Existence (Sat) alone was in the beginning, one only without a second ... It thought, May

13.4 What the ' Field is' namely, what its substance is; what it is ' like' , namely, what things depend on it; what its ' modifications' are, namely, what its transformations are; what the ' purpose' is for which it has been originated; ' what it is,' namely, what its true nature is; ' who it is,' namely, who the individual self is and what Its nature is like; what Its ' powers' , are, namely, what powers It possesses. All this, briefly learn from Me.

13.5 It is this truth regarding the Kestra and Ksetrajna that has been sung in various ways by Parasara and others seers. For example, ' I and you and others are composed of the elements; and the elements, following the stream of qualities, assume a shape; these qualities, Sattva and the rest, are dependent on Karma; and Karma, accumulated by nescience, influences the condition of all beings. The self is pure, imperishable, tranquil, void of qualities and is pre-eminent over Prakrti' (V. P., 2.13.69-71). Similarly: ' The body, characterised by head, hands, feet and the like is different from Purusa.' Which of these can I designate by the name I?' (Ibid., 2.13.89). And also: ' Are you the head or the belly? Are you indeed the feet and other limbs, or do they belong to you, O King? You are distinct in your nature from all your members, O King. Know, O King, and understand Who

13.6 - 13.7 The ' great elements, the Ahankara, the uddhi and the Avyakta' are substances that originate the Ksetra. The ' great elements' are the earth, water, fire, air and ether. The ' Ahankara' here means hutadi (primeval element). The ' uddhi' is called Mahat; the ' Avyakta' is known as the Prakrti. The ' ten senses and the one' and the five objects of senses are principles depending on the Ksetra. The ' five sensorial organs' are ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose. The five motor organs are speech, hands, feet, and the organs of excretion and reproduction. These are the ten senses. The Manas is the additional ' one' moe. The ' objects of the senses' are five --- sound, touch, form, taste and smell. Desire, hatred, pleasure and pain, being the transformation of the Ksetra, are said to be the modifications of the Ksetra. Though desire, hatred, pleasure and pain are the qualities of the self, yet they originate from the association of the self with the Ksetra. Sri Krsna will state that they are the attributes of the self; ' In the experience of pleasure and pain, the self is said to be the cause' (13.20). The combination of elements serves as the support (Adhrti) of the intelligent self. As such, the word Adhrti means substratum. The combination of material elements has arisen as the substratum for the self to experience pleasure and pain, and for acquiring worldly experiences and the final release. The combination of elements is formed by substances commencing from the Prakrti and ending with the earth; it is the basis of senses which are endowed with the modifications of the nature of desire,

hatred, pleasure and pain. These form a Sanghata or an association of elements. It serves as the basis of the experience of pleasure and pain by the individual self. This is what is said of the Ksetra. This Ksetra has been explained briefly with its modifications and effects. Now certain qualities, the effects of the Ksetra, worthy of being acquired as being the means for securing the knowledge of the self, are enumerated.

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13.8 ' Amanitva' means freedom from superiority complex towards eminent people. ' Adambhitva' : ' Dambha' is the practice of Dharma for winning fame as a virtuous person; freedom from it is Adambhitva. ' Ahimsa' is absence of tendency to injure others by speech, mind and body. ' Kshanti' is the tendency of keeping the mind unmodified even when harmed by others. ' Arjava' means having a uniform disposition towards others in speech, mind and body.
' Acaryopasana' means being intent in prostrating, questioning, performing service etc., in regard to the teacher who imparts the knowledge of the self.
' Sauca' is the competence of the mind, speech and body, as enjoined by the Sastras, for the knowledge of the self and the means of this attainment.
' Sthairya' is possessing unshakable faith in the Sastras concerning the self.
' Atma-vinigraha' means the turning away from all objects that are different in nature from the self.

13.9 ' Absence of desire' with regard to sense-objects means dispassion towards all objects different from the spiritual self by the constant awareness of the evil in them. ' Absence of egotism' means freedom from the misconception that the self is the body, which is in reality different from the self. This is only an illustration standing for other misconceptions too. It indicates freedom from the feeling of possession towards things which do not belong to one. ' Perception of evil in birth, death, old age, disease and sorrow' means the constant contemplation on the inevitable evil of birth, death, old age and sorrow while in the body.

13.10 ' Non-attachment' means freedom from attachment to things other than the self. ' Absecne of clinging' to son, wife, home and the like means absence of excessive affection for these beyond the limits allowed by the Sastras.
' Constant even-mindedness' to all desirable and undesriable events means the state of freedom from joy and grief with regard to occurrences springing from desire.

13.11 ' Constant devotion' means devotion with a single end, namely, Myself the Lord of all; ' remaining in places free from people' means having no love for

crowds of people.

13.12 ' Adhyatma-jnana' is the knowledge that pertains to the self. Reflection for the attainment of knowledge of the truth, namely, being always intent in the thought having for its object the knowledge of the truth. ' Knowledge' is that by which the self is realised. The meaning is that it is the means for the knowledge of the self. The group of attributes mentioned before, beginning with modesty etc., are those that are favourable for the knowledge of the self in association with the body. All the evolutes of Ksetra, which are different from those mentioned above, constitute ignorance, as they are antagonistic to the knowledge of the self. Now, the nature of Ksetrajna, characterised as the knower in the stanza, ' He who knows it' (13.1), is examined:

13.13 I shall declare that nature of the individual self (brahman) which is the object to be known, namely, what is to be gained by means of virtues like modesty etc., by knowing which one attains to the self which is immortal, birthless, free from old age, death and such other material qualities. [The expression is split up as --- Anadi = beginningless; Mat-param = having Me as the Highest.] Anadi means that which is beginningless. Indeed, there is no origination for this individual self (brahman) and for the same reason, It is endless. The Sruti also declares: ' The wise one is not born, nor dies' (Ka. U., 2.18). ' Matpara' means having Me for the Highest. Verily, it has been told: ' Know that which is other than this (lower nature), which is the life-principle, to be the highest Prakrti of Mine' (7.5). y virtue of being the body of the Lord, the nature of the self finds joy in being completely subsidiary to Him. So the Sruti declares: ' He who, dwelling in the self, is within the self, whom the self does not know, whose body the self is and who controls the self from within ...' (r. U. Madh., 5.7.22). Similarly do the texts declare: ' He is the cause, Lord of Lords and of sense organs. He has no progenitor, nor lord' (Sve. U., 6.9); and ' He is the Lord of the Pradhana and of the individual selves, and the Lord of qualities (Ibid., 6.16). That which is conjoined with the quality of infinite dimension or extensiveness can be designated as brahman. It is different from, and not circumscribable by, the body etc. The meaning is, It is the principle which apprehends the Ksetra. Sruti also declares: ' He (i.e., the individual self)

partakes of infinity' (Sve. U., 5.9). y its Karma It is circumscribed. It assumes Its infinite nature only when It is freed from the bonds of Karma. The term brahman is applied to designate the individual self as in: ' He, crossing beyond the Gunas' , becomes fit for the sake of brahman' (14.26), ' I am the ground of the brahman, who is immutable and immortal' (14.27), and ' Having attained to the state of brahman, tranquil, he neither grieves nor craves; regarding all beings alike, he attains supreme devotion to Me' (18.54). It (brahman) is said to be neither being nor non-being. The terms ' being' and ' non-being' cannot signify the nature of the self because It is neither effect nor cause. For It is called ' being' (Sat) in the condition of effect when It has the form of gods etc. As It cannot possess names and forms in the condition of cause, It is said to be ' non-being' or Asat. So the Sruti texts declare: ' In the beginning, verily, this (brahman) was non-existence; therefrom the being was born' (Tai. U., 2.7.1) and ' Verily, this (brahman) was then undiffernțiated. It became differentiated by names and forms' (r. U., 1.4.7). The self' s conditions as effect and cause have arisen on account of veiling by Avidya or ignorant in the form of Karma. It is not an expression of Its real nature. So, the terms ' being' and ' non-being' do not signify the nature of the self, If it is argued that, in the passage ' In the beginning, verily, this (rahman) was non-existence' (Tai. U., 2.7.1), it is the Supreme rahman in the state of cause that is described --- even then it can be pointed out that the Supreme rahman in causal condition has, for His body, the conscient and non-conscient entities in a subtle state, incapable of being differentiated by names and forms. Such a description is therefore valid. On the same principle the nature of Ksetra (body) and Ksetrajna (individual self) in the state of cause can also be indicated by the term ' non-being' . ut this condition of the individual self has arisen due to Karma and such descriptions as ' being' and ' non-being' are applicable to the self only in the state of bondage. Its pure form cannot be signified by the terms ' being' and ' non-being' .

13.14 Everywhere are Its hands and feet i.e., the self in Its pure form is able to perform everywhere the works of hands and feet. Its eyes, heads and mouths are everywhere; It performs everywhere the task of eyes etc. The Sruti declares; ' Without feet or hands, He moves swiftly and seizes things; He sees

without eyes, He hears without ears? (Sve. U., 3.19). It may be said that it means that the Supreme rahman performs everywhere the task of hands, feet etc., even though He is devoid of hands and feet. If ' rahman' is taken to mean the self, it can be asked how this power of the Supreme rahman (namely, having hand, feet, eyes, etc., everywhere) can be attributed to the self, then the answer is that it is established in the Srutis that the pure individual self has the capacity of performing the task of hands, feet etc., because It is equal to Him. Sruti also declares: ' Then, the wise seer, shaking off good and evil, stainless, attains the supreme equality with Him' (Mun. U., 3.1.3). Sri Krsna will also teach later on: ' Resorting to this knowledge, It partakes of My nature' (14.2). It exists encompassing all things, whatever aggregate of things that exist in the world; It encompasses them. The sense is that in Its pure state, It is all-pervasive, as It has no limitation of space etc.

13.15 Sarvendriya-gunabhasam i.e., shining by the functions of the senses --- means that which is shedding light on the functions of all the senses. The ' Gunas' of the senses means the activities of the senses. The meaning is that the self is capable of knowing the objects with the functioning of the senses. ' Yet devoid of the senses' i.e., It is capable by Itself, of knowing everything. Such is the meaning. It is ' detached' , namely, It is free, by nature, from attachment to the bodies of gods etc. ' Yet supporting all,' yet capable of supporting all bodies, such as of gods etc., as declared in the Sruti. ' It is one, is threefold ...' (Cha. U., 7.26.2). It is devoid of Gunas, i.e., by nature It is devoid of Sattva etc., and yet It is the experiencer of the Gunas' --- It has the capability to experience Sattva etc.

13.16 Abandoning the elements like earth etc., It can exist outside the body. It can exist within them while performing spontaneous activities as established in the Srutis: ' Eating, playing, enjoying with partners or with vehicles' (Cha. U., 8.12.3). ' It is unmoving and yet moving' --- it is by nature, unmoving, It is moving when It has a body. It is so subtle that none can comprehend It. Although existing in a body, this principle, possessed of all powers and omniscient, cannot be comprehended by bound ones because of Its subtlety and Its distinctiveness from the body. It is far away and yet It is very near ---

though present in one' s own body, It is far away from those who are devoid of modesty and other qualities (mentioned above) as also to those who possess contrary qualities. To those who possess modesty and such other qualities, the same self is very near.

13.17 Though the entity called the self is present everywhere in the bodies of divinities, men etc., It is ' undivided' because of Its form being that of the knower. However, to those who are ignorant, It appears divided, by such forms as those of divinities etc. --- ' I am a divinity,' ' man' etc. Though the self can be contemplated by way of co-ordinate predication as one with the body in such significations as, ' I am divinity, I am a man,' It can be known as being different from the body, because of Its being a knower. That is why it has already been pointed out at the beginning: ' He who knows It? (13.1). Now Sri Krsna says that It can be known as different also on other grounds --- as the ' supporter of elements' etc. ecause It supports the earth and other elements combined in the shape of the body, the self can be known as being different from the elements supported. The sense is that It can be known as a separate entity. Likewise, It is that which ' devours' , namely, the consumer of physical food etc. ecause, It ' devours' the food, It can be known as an entity different from the elements. It causes ' generation' --- It is the cause of transformation of consumed food etc., into other forms like blood etc. As eating, generating etc., are not seen in a corpse, it is settled that the body, an aggregate of elements, cannot be the cause of devouring food, generating of species and supporting them.

13.18 This (self) alone is the ' light' which illuminates things like the sun, a lamp, a gem etc. It is knowledge alone in the form of the effulgence of the self which illuminates a lamp, the sun etc. ut a lamp etc., dispel the darkness that intervenes between the sense of sight and its subject. Their illuminating power is limited to this extent. This is said to be beyond Tamas (darkness). The term Tamas denotes Prakrti in its subtle state. The meaning is that the self transcends Prakrti. Therefore, It is to be comprehended as knowledge, i.e., to be understood as of the form of knowledge. It is attainable by means of knowledge --- such as modesty etc., already described. It is present in the

heart of all, i.e., It is specially settled, or present in the heart of all beings like men etc.

13.19 This is a brief description of the principle of Ksetra --- i.e., the text beginning with ' The great elements, the Ahankara' (13.5) and ending with ' An association' (13.6). ' Knowledge' which is the means for attaining the comprehension of the principle known as the self has been taught in the text beginning with ' Modesty' (13.7) and ending with ' Reflection for attainment of knowledge of truth' (13.11). The nature of Ksetrajna (the self) which is the object of knowledge has also been concisely taught by the text beginning with ' The beginningless brahman having Me for the Highest' (13.12) and ending with ' present in the heart of all' (13.17). My devotee, on knowing this, i.e., the truth about the Ksetra, the truth about the means for attaining the nature of the self as distinct from the Ksetra, and the truth about the Ksetrajna, becomes worthy to attain My state of being. What is called My state of being is My own nature (Svabhava), namely, the transcendence of transmigratory existence. The meaning is that he becomes worthy to attain the state of freedom for transmigratory existence. Next (1) the beginninglessness of the conjunction between the Prakrti and the self which are completely distinct, (2) the difference in the workings of these two when they are associated with each other, and (3) the cause of this conjunction --- these are treated:

13.20 Know this Prakrti and Purusa (self) are uncreated and are beginningless. Know that the modifications, desire, hatred etc., which cause bondage, and the qualities of modesty etc., which cause release, originate from Prakrti. The Prakrti, having no beginning, develops into the form of the body, and conjoint with the self, causes bondage through its own transformations such as desire and hatred. The same Prakrti, through its transformations like modesty etc., causes release. Such is the meaning. The difference in the functions of Prakrti and Purusa in combination is stated ---

13.21 The ' Karya' means the body, the ' Karanas' mean the instruments, i.e., the senses of perception and action plus the Manas. In their operations, the Prakrti, subservient to the self, is alone the causal factor. The sense is that

their operations, which are the means of experience, have their foundation in the Prakrti, which has developed in the form of the body subservient to the self. In regard to this, the authority is the aphorism, ' The self is an agent, on account of the scriptures having the purpose' (. S., 2.3.33) etc. The agency of the self means that the self is the cause of the will (effort) to support the body. The self (Purusa) associated with the body is the cause for experiencing pleasures and pains. The meaning is that It is the seat of those experiences. Thus, has been explained the difference in the operations of the Prakrti and of the self when they are mutually conjoined. He now proceeds to explain how, though the self, which in Its pristine nature experiences Itself by Itself as nothing but joy, becomes the cause of experiencing both pleasure and pain derived from sense objects when It is conjoined with a body. The term Guna figuratively represents effects. The self (in Its pristine nature) experiences Itself by Itself, as nothing buy joy. ut when dwelling in the body, i.e., when It is in conjunction with the Prakrti, It experiences the qualities born of Prakrti, namely, happiness, pain etc., which are the effects of Gunas like Sattva etc. He explains the cause of conjunction with the Prakrti:

13.22 The self, settled in a series of bodies of divinities, men etc., which are modifications of Prakrti, becomes attached to happiness, pain etc., resulting from the Sattva and other qualities associated with the respective wombs, and hence engages Itself in virtuous and sinful deeds, constituting the means for happiness, misery etc. In order to experience the fruits of those good and evil deeds, It is born again in good and evil wombs. Then It becomes active and consequently is born again as a result of Its activities. As long as It does not cultivate qualities like modesty etc., which are the means for realising the self, so long Its entanglement in Samsara continues like this. Thus, it has been declared here that attachment causes births in good and evil wombs.

13.23 The self existing in the body becomes the ' spectator and approver' of this body by means of the will in consonance with the functioning of the body. Likewise, It is the ' supporter' of the body, Similarly, It becomes ' experiencer' of the pleasure and pain resulting from the activities of the body. Thus, by virtue of ruling and supporting the body and by making the body completely

subservient, It becomes ' the great lord' (Mahesvara) in relation to the body, the senses and the mind. Sri Krsna will further declare: ' When the lord acquires the body, and when he leaves it and goes on his way, he takes these as the wind carries scents from their places' (15.8). In the body, It is said to be the ' supreme self' in relation to the body, the senses and the mind. The word ' self' (Atman) is applied to the body and the mind subsequently. It is said afterwards: ' Some perceive the self by means of the self through meditation' (13.24). The particle ' also' (api) indicates that the self is the ' supreme lord' ? in relation to the body just as It is the supreme self. The supremacy of the self has been described in the text beginning with ' It is the beginningless brahman having Me for the Highest' (13.12). It is true that the self (in Its emancipated state) has limitless power knowledge. ut It becomes the great lord and the supreme self only in relation to the body. Such lordship and supremacy is the result of attachment to the Gunas arising from the beginningless conjunction with Prakrti.

13.24 He who ' understands' , namely, knows truly with discrimination, the self to be thus, and also the Prakrti as having the aforesaid nature along with Sattva and other Gunas, whose nature will be later examined, is never born again, i.e., is never reborn conjointly with Prakrti again in ' whatever state he may be placed,' i.e., in whatever painful condition he may be placed in the bodies of divinities, men etc. The meaning is that at the time when the body ceases to exist, the self will attain the purified state characterised by boundless knowledge devoid of evil.

13.25 The different type of Yogis are described herein: (1) Some with perfect Yoga perceive the self (Atmanam) in the body with the mind (Atmana) by meditation. (2) Others with imperfect Yoga see the self, with mind rendered fit for Yoga, by Sankhya Yoga, namely, Jnana Yoga, (3) Still others, (a) unqualified to practise Jnana Yoga, and (b qualified but preferring an easier method, and (c) also distinguished persons like Janaka --- all these perceive the self after being qualified for Yoga by Karma Yoga which contains within itself knowledge (Jnana).

13.26 ut some, namely, those who are not qualified for Karma Yoga etc., for realising the self, listen to Jnanins who know the truth, and meditate on the self through Karma Yoga, etc. --- they too pass beyond death. It means that those who are devoted to what they hear only, even they, intent on hearing and devoid of evils, begin in due course, the practice of Karma Yoga etc., and pass beyond death. y the term ' too' (api), the difference in levels is made out. Now, in order to teach the contemplation on the distinctness of the self conjoined with the Prakrti, he says that all entities, movables and immovables, are the product of combination between the conscient and the non-conscient:

13.27 Whatever being is born, whether it be movable or stationary, it is born only from the mutual combination of the Ksetra and Ksetrajna. The sense is that it is born only from this combination, i.e., is born as a compound of the two and never in their separateness.

13.28 He who sees the Atman as It really is --- he is the one who sees the Atman as a distinct entity in all embodied beings that are composed of Prakrti and Purusa, even in bodies of diverse nature of gods, men etc. The true seer is one who sees the Atman as the supreme ruler in all these bodies as the imperishable self, though the bodies are subject to destruction. Conversely the purport is that he who sees the Atman, only as characterised by the unequal forms of the bodies as men, gods etc., and as possessed of birth, death etc. --- such a person is perpetually caught up in transmigratory existence.

13.29 ' The ruler' (the self) abides in the bodies of divinities and the rest as their supporter, controller and as their Sesin (principal). He who sees the self free from dissimilar shapes of divinities etc., and as being of the same form of knowledge, he does not injure himself by ' himself' , namely, by his mind. Therefore, as a result of seeing the sameness of the nature of the self in every place as a knower, he attains the ' highest goal.' What is to be reached is called ' goal' . He attains the supreme, namely, the self in its pure form. On the contrary, if he should view the self as dissimilar in every place, i.e., identifies It with the bodies, then he ' injure the self, namely, hurls It into the middle of the ocean of Samsara.

13.30 When he perceives that ' all acts are performed by the Prakrti' in the manner previously stated in, ' Prakrti is said to be the cause of agency to the body and sense-organs' (13.20), and perceive also that ' the self, being of the form of knowledge, is not the doer,' and that the self' s conjunction with the Prakrti, Its direction of the body and Its experiences of happiness and misery are the result of ignorance of the nature of Karma --- then indeed he perceives the pure self.

13.31 When he perceives that the diversified ' modes of existence' of all beings as men, divinities etc., are founded on the two principles of Prakrti and Purusa; when he perceives that their existence as divine, human, short, tall etc., is rooted in ' one' common foundation, namely, in the Prakrti, and not in the self; when he sees that ' their expansion' , i.e., the successive proliferaton into sons, grandsons and such varieties of beings, is from Prakrti alone --- then he reaches the brahman. The meaning is that he attains the self devoid of limitations, in Its pure form of knowledge.

13.32 This ' supreme self' (Atman) has been defined as having a nature different from that of the body. While existing in the body, It is ' immutable' , i.e., It is not liable to decay as It is ' without a beginning,' i.e., never created at any point of time. ecause It is ' free from Gunas,' being devoid of Sattva and other Gunas of Prakrti, It neither acts nor gets tainted; It is not tainted by the qualities of the body. Granted that the self being without Gunas, does not act; but how is it possible that the Atman is not tainted by Its constant association with the qualities of the body? To this, Sri Krsna replies:

13.33 As the ' all-pervading ether,' though in contact with all substances, is ' not tainted' by the qualities of all these substances, as it is ' subtle' --- even so the self, though ' present in all the bodies,' everywhere, namely, in divinities, men etc., is not contaminated by these bodies by reason of Its extreme subtleness.

13.34 As the ' one sun' illumines ' all this world' by his radiance, so the ' knower of the body' illumines the entire Ksetra, i.e., the body, by Its own knowledge, within and without and from head to toe, by conceiving ' This my body is of this nature.' This self of the said nature is totally different from the body, because It is the knower of the body. The body is the object of Its knowledge and is therefore different from It, even as the illuminating sun is totally different from the illumined world.

13.35 Those who ' discern thus' in the described manner the ' difference' , namely, the difference between the body and the knower of the body with ' the eye of knowledge' or discrimination, and also the ' means of deliverance from manifested Prakrti' --- they attain the ' highest' , namely, the self. They are completely delivered from bondage. Moksa is that by which deliverance is effected. The means of deliverance as already stated consists of qualities beginning with modesty (13.7). They, through the knowledge already imparted concerning the differences between the body and the self, know those differences existing between them. Then learning about modesty etc., which form the means of deliverance from Prakrti that has devleoped into material elements constituting the body, they have to practise these virtues, and they will thereby be absolutely delivered from bondage and will reach the self marked by infinite knowledge abiding in Its own form.

BHAGAVADGITA

English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda

Chapter 14

14.1 The Lord said -- I shall declare again another kind of knowledge which is distinct from what was taught earlier concerning Gunas such as Sattva, falling within the sphere of Prakrti and Purusa. This knowledge going to be revealed is the best of all forms of knowledge concerning the Prakrti and the self. Having gained this knowledge, all sages, namely, those given to meditation, have attained perfection, beyond this world, the sphere of Samsara, having attained the essential and pure form of the self. He further extols this knowledge, distinguishing it by its fruits:

14.2 They, ' resorting to this knowledge' which will be expounded later, come to partake of My nature, and they attain My status. ' They are not born at the time of creation,' they are not subjected to the process of creation, and they ' suffer not at the time of dissolution,' i.e. they are not subjected to the distress involved in dissolution of the universe. In order to show how the Gunas of Prakrti constitute the cause of bondage, Sri Krsna now declares that, the aggregation of beings, born from the conjunction of Purusa and Prakrti as stated already in the passages, ' Whatever being is born' (13.26), is brought about by the Lord Himself:

14.3 In that great brahman forming my womb, I lay the germ. The non-conscient Prakrti is alluded to in the text ' Earth, water, fire, air, ether, Manas, uddhi and Ahankara --- thus My Prakrti is eightfold' (7.4-5). This Prakrti is designated here by the name ' the great brahman' by reason of its being the cause of modifications like the Mahat, the Ahankara etc. In the Srutis also, here and there, even the Prakrti is designated as brahman, as in: ' He who is all-knowing, all-wise, whose austerity consists of knowledge --- from Him are produced this brahman as also food, i.e., the universe of name and form' (Mun. U., 1.1.9) The higher Prakrti, which is the mass of conscient selves, alluded to in the passage, ' Know My higher Prakrti to be distinct from this; it is the life-principle' (7.5). It is here expressed by the term ' Garbha' , the source or

womb in which all living beings originate. I lay the germ, constituting the mass of conscious beings, in that great brahman, which is non-conscient and forms the womb. From that conjunction between the two Prakrtis, brought about by My will is brought forth the origin of all entities from rahma down to tuft to grass. He continues to say: ' I Myself bring about the conjunction of the conscient and unconscient Prakrtis in the manifested state of effect' .

14.4 In all wombs such as those of gods, Gandharvas, Yaksas, Raksasas, men, animals, beasts, birds, serpents etc., whatever forms are generated, the brahman (Prakrti) is the ' great womb' or cause. eginning from Mahat and ending with the five elements, Prakrti, with the mass of conscient selves imbedded by Me in it, is the cause. I am the sowing father. The meaning is that I am the imbedder of the multiplex of conscient selves according to each one' s Karma. Now, He teaches the cause of continuing births as divinities etc., of those born in this manner at the beginning of a cycle of creation. It is due to the conjunction of these beings with Prakrti, in keeping with their old Karmas:

14.5 The three Gunas of Prakrti --- Sattva, Rajas and Tamas --- are inherent in the essential nature of Prakrti and are particular expressions of it. They can be known only through their effects such as ' brightness' etc. They are not apparent in the unevolved state of Prakrti but become apparent in its transformations as Mahat etc. They bind the self, which is conjoined with bodies such as those of divinities, men etc., composed of the modifications of Prakrti beginning with Mahat and ending with the elements. The self is immutable, i.e., It is not in Its pristine nature conjoined with the Gunas. ut the Gunas bind It when residing in the body. The meaning is that they bind It by virtue of the limiting conditions of Its living in the body. Sri Krsna proceeds to speak of the nature of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and their modes of binding (the self):

14.6 Of ' these' , i.e., of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, the characteristic nature of the Sattva is this: it illuminates on account of its being pure. What is called purity is to be bereft of qualities which veil light and happiness. ecause its nature is solely the generation of light and happiness, it constitutes the cause

of light and happiness. ' Light' or illumination is enlightenment about a thing as it is. It is ' not morbid,' i.e., an effect called morbidity (disease) does not exist in its presence. The meaning is, that Sattva is the cause of health. The Guna, called Sattva, however, binds the self by attachment to happiness and knowledge. The meaning is that it causes attachment to happiness and knowledge. When attachment to knowledge and happiness is born, one engages oneself in secular and Vedic means for securing them. Consequently, one is born in such bodies which constitute the means for realising such fruits. Hence the Sattva binds the self through attachment to happiness and knowledge. What is said is this: Sattva generates knowledge and happiness; again it generates attachment to them.

14.7 Rajas is of the nature of passion, namely, it causes sexual desire. ' Passion' (Raga) is mutual yearning between a man and a woman. ' Springing from thirst and attachment' means it is the source of sensuality and attachment. ' Trsna' , (thirst, sensuality) is the longing for all sense-objects, such as sound etc. ' Sanga' (attachment) is the inordinate longing for union with one' s sons, friends and such other relations. y creating longing for actions, it binds the embodied self. Whatever actions have been begun by the self from longiing for sensual enjoyments, they become the cause of births in bodies that constitute the means for experiencing such enjoyments. Therefore Rajas binds the embodied self through attachment to actions. What is said is this: Rajas is the cause of sexuality, sensuality and attachment, and of constant engagement in actions.

14.8 y ' false knowledge' is here to be understood as what is other than knowledge. What is called knowledge is right perception of things. What is other than this is false knowledge. And Tamas springs from knowledge contrary to the true nature of thinngs. It deludes all embodied selves. Delusion is erroneous knowledge. The meaning is that Tamas is the cause of erroneous knowledge. eing the cause of negligence, indolence and sleep, it binds the embodied self through them. ' Negligence' is inattentiveness, which causes one to perform works other than what ought to be done. ' Indolence' is the tendency to avoid work; it may even develop into absolute inaction. ' Sleep.' is the state

in which the external organs stop working due to exhaustion and seek to recover from the same. In sleep when only the outgoing actionof the senses stop, it is called dream state. When even the mind (Manas) ceases to function, it is called dreamless sleep. He states the cardinal feature forming the ways of bondage through Sattva etc.

14.9 Sattva mainly attaches one to pleasure. Rajas mainly attaches one to actions. ut Tamas, veiling knowledge of true things and being the cause of false knowledge, mainly attaches one to actions which are contrary to those which ought to be done. The Sattva and other qualities evolve from the nature of Prakrti, developed into the form of the body. Owing to this fact that they have evolved out of the nature of Prakrti, they always co-exist in bodies at all time. How, then, can they cause effects which are mutually contrary? He replies:

14.10 Even though all the three Gunas of Sattva etc., are associated with the nature of the self conjoined with Prakrti in the form of body, yet owing to the dominance of previous Karmas and the differences in the food nourishing the body, Sattva etc., preponderate or are subdued by turn. Sometimes Sattva preponderates prevailing over Rajas and Tamas; sometimes Rajas preponderates prevailing over Tamas and Sattva, and sometimes Tamas preponderates prevailing over Rajas and Sattva. He teaches that this changing preponderance of the Gunas can be inferred from the knowledge of the effects produced by them.

14.11 When the light of knowledge shines revealing the truth of things emerging through all the gateways of knowledge such as the eyes etc., in the body, one should know that Sattva is prevailing.

14.12 ' Greed' is the tendency not to spend one' s own property. ' Activity' is the disposition to be active devoid of any purpose. ' Undertaking of works' is engagement in works which yield fruits. ' Unrest' is absence of rest of sense-activities. ' Longing' is the desire for sense objects. These predominate when Rajas has increased. The meaning is that whenever greed etc., prevail, then

one should know that Rajas has very much increased.

14.13 ' Non-illumination' is the absence of knowledge. ' Inactivity' is immovableness. ' Negligence' is inadvertence resulting in works that should not be done. ' Delusion' is wrong knowledge. These arise when Tamas waxes strong. y these, one should know that the Tamas has increased very much.

14.14 When the ' Sattva prevails' i.e., while the Sattva continues to be prevalent, if the embodies self meets with death, It reaches the pure worlds, i.e., regions conducive to the knowledge of the self. The purport is this: If Satva preponderates in a person at the time of death, he will be reborn in the families of those who have the knowledge of the self, and thus be qualified to perform auspicious acts which are the means of attaining the true knowledge of the self.

14.15 (a) Meeting with death when Rajas is preponderant, one is reborn in the families of those who act for the sake of fruits for themselves. eing reborn in such families, he becomes qualified to perform auspicious acts which constitute the way for attaining heaven and the like. (b) Similarly, one who dies when Tamas is preponderant is born in the wombs of beings lacking in intelligence, namely, in the wombs of dogs, pigs etc. The meaning is that he is reborn as one incapable of realising any human end.

14.16 Thus, the ' fruit of a good deed,' namely, disinterested work in the form of My worship, performed by one who dies when Sattva prevails --- is birth in the family of those who know the self. There he acquires more Sattva than before and the self becomes more pure, namely, devoid of the slightest vestige of suffering. So say those who know about the development of Sattva. ut the ' fruit of Rajas,' dominating at the time of death, is ' suffering in Samsara.' In consists in successive births in families attached to actions for the sake of fruits. Rebirth of this type increases Rajas further, resulting in actions for gaining their fruits. So say those who know about the developments of this Guna. ' Ignorance' is the result of Tamas. The fruit of Tamas dominating at the time of death, is successive conditions of ignorance. What are the results derived

from Sattva etc.? To this, He answers:

14.17 From the increase of Sattva, knowledge i.e., ' true and direct knowledge' of the self arises. From Rajas develops likewise ' intense desire' for heaven etc. From Tamas similarly develops ' negligence' leading to evil deeds; and from this, delusion, i.e., erroneous knowledge; and from that still more Tamas; and thence ignorance, namely absence of knowledge.

14.18 Thus, in the manner explained, those who ' rest in Sattva rise upwards,' namely, they attain liberation from the bonds of Samsara gradually. Those who, ' abiding in Rajas' which produces greed for heaven etc., engage themselves in actions which constitute the means for obtaining such results. Experiencing those results, they are born again and engage in, and perform, the very same acts. So they remain in the ' middle' . This is mostly suffering, as it is characterised by rebirths. Those of Tamasic nature ' stoop down' into lower levels, as Tamas grows ever worse in them. They go ' downwards' i.e., to the lowest state among human beings, then to the condition of animals; then to that of worms; insects etc., then of immovable things, and even to the condition of shrubs and creepers, and ultimately to the condition of stones, wood, clod of earth, straw etc. Sri Krsna now teaches about the manner of those in whom the Sattva has gradually increased by adopting special holy food and performance of special disinterested deeds, and who thus rise upward by transcending the Gunas.

14.19 The seer has in the first place to totally subdue his Rajas and Tamas and stay in pure Sattva. This is accomplished through nourishment by Sattvika food and the performance of disinterested actions for the propitiation of the Lord. He then perceives ' no agent of action other than the Gunas' i.e., sees that the Gunas are themselves the agents according to their nature. Further he perceives what is ' other than the Gunas,' i.e., perceives the Gunas which are agents and the self who is not an agent of action. Such a seer attains to ' My state,' i.e., gains likeness with Me in transcending the three Gunas etc. The purport is this: The self, pure in nature by Itself, gains agency through varius actions by contact with the Gunas springing from past Karmas. When one

perceives the self in this way, namely, that the self by Itself is no agent of actions and is of the nature of infinite knowledge, then It attains to My likeness. It is stated that one attains to the likeness of the Lord after perceiving the self as a non-agent and as other than the Gunas. What is meant by the state of likeness to the Lord? Sri Krsna now describes it:

14.20 The embodied self --- ' crossing beyond these three Gunas,' the Sattva and the rest, which ' arise in the body,' i.e., spring from Prakrti transformed into the form of the body --- perceives the self as different from the Gunas and as of the form of knowledge only. Released thus from birth, death, old age and sorrow, It experiences the immortal self. This is what is meant by My likeness. Arjuna now wants to know about the characteristics of one who has transcended the Gunas and the means of such transcendence:

14.21 Arjuna said -- y what signs, namely, distinguishing features, is a man who has crossed beyond these three Gunas, Sattva and the rest, characterised? What is his behaviour? With what kind of behaviour is he associated and how does it serve as a sign for knowing his state? Such is the meaning. How does he, i.e., by what means does he cross beyond the three Gunas, the Sattva and the rest?

14.22 The Lord said -- He does not hate the effects of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas known as illumination, activity and delusion respectively, when they are prevailing in regard to undesired things other than the self; nor longs for them when they cease, i.e., when desired things other than the self become unavailable. Hating things not conducive to the realisations of the self and longing for things conducive thereof, do not come under this law stated in the Verse.

14.23 He who sits like one ' unconcerned,' namely, whose satisfaction consists in the vision of the self as different from the Gunas and sits like one unconcerned about other things and is not therefore disturbed by the Gunas through hatred and longing and who remains quiet, reflecting: ' The Gunas function in their effects like illumination etc., and so ' rests unshaken,' i.e, does

not act in accordance with the effects of the Gunas.

14.24 - 14.25 He who is ' alike in pleasure and pain,' namely, whose mind is equal in pleasure and pain; ' who dwells in his self,' namely, who dwells in his self because his love for the self keeps his mind in equanimity in pleasure and pain arising from the birth, death etc., of his sons and other relatives and friends, and who, because of this, ' looks upon a clod, a stone and a piece of gold as of equal value,' who consequently remains the same towards things dear or hateful, i.e., who treats alike the worldly objects desired and undesired; who is ' intelligent,' namely, proficient in discrimination between the Prakrti and the self; who, therefore, regards blame and praise as alike, namely, who treats with equality praise and blame looking upon good and evil qualities as born of identification with bodies such as those of men etc., and as such unconnected with his real self; who is the ' same in honour and dishonour' because these are feelings based on the misconception that the body is the self, and as a consequence of such discrimination between the body and the self, ' looks alike on friend and foe,' because he understands that ther is no connection between them and himself; and who has thus abandoned all entrprises in which embodied beings are involved --- he who is like this, is said to have risen above the Gunas. Now Sri Krsna states the main method (technique) for transcending such Gunas:

14.24 - 14.25 He who is ' alike in pleasure and pain,' namely, whose mind is equal in pleasure and pain; ' who dwells in his self,' namely, who dwells in his self because his love for the self keeps his mind in equanimity in pleasure and pain arising from the birth, death etc., of his sons and other relatives and friends, and who, because of this, ' looks upon a clod, a stone and a piece of gold as of equal value,' who consequently remains the same towards things dear or hateful, i.e., who treats alike the worldly objects desired and undesired; who is ' intelligent,' namely, proficient in discrimination between the Prakrti and the self; who, therefore, regards blame and praise as alike, namely, who treats with equality praise and blame looking upon good and evil qualities as born of identification with bodies such as those of men etc., and as such unconnected with his real self; who is the ' same in honour and dishonour' because these are

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14.26 The state of transcendence of Gunas is not attained merely by reflecting on the difference between the Prakrti and the self as declared in the text such as, ' When the seer beholds no agent of action other than the Gunas, then he transcends the Gunas, for it is liable then to be sublated by contrary subtle impressions (Vasanas) which have continued from beginningless time. He who, with unswerving hakti Yoga, namely, one-pointed hakti Yoga, serves Me of true-resolve, supremely compassionate and the ocean of parental affection for supplicants --- such a man crosses over the Gunas of Sattva etc., which are otherwise invincible. He becomes worthy for brahmabhuya, the state of brahman i.e., he becomes qualified for the state of brahman. The meaning is that he attains the self as It really is, immortal and immutable.

14.27 The term ' hi' (for) denotes cause. I, who am to be served by unswerving hakti Yoga, am ' the ground of the individual self, immortal and immutable, and also of eternal Dharma,' namely, surpassing eternal prosperity and also perfect felicity, i.e., of the felicity attained by the Jnanin stated in texts such as ' Realising that Vasudeva is all' (7.19). I, being of such nature, devotion to Me helps the Jiva to transcend the Gunas. Although the expression ' eternal Dharma' is indicative of the conduct to be observed, in the given context, it means the goal to be attained; for, what follows and what precedes it, denote the goal and not conduct. The purport is this: It has been stated that seeking refuge with the Lord is the only means for transcending the Gunas and the attainment of self-realisation, prosperity and the Supreme eing in the earlier text beginning with, ' For this divine Maya of Mine consisting of the three Gunas is hard to break through, except for those who take refuge in Me alone ...' (7.14). Thus, seeking surrender to the Lord with one-pointed mind is the only

means for transcending the Gunas and for the attainment of the state of brahman through that. [Here Prapatti, surrender to the Lord, is mentioned as a limb of unswerving hakti Yoga according to some interpreters. This is however a disputable point, as some maintain that Prapatti is in itself an independent path].

BHAGAVADGITA

English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda

Chapter 15

15.1 The Lord said -- The Vedas speak of the imperishable ' Asvattha tree' called Samsara, which has its ' roots above and branches below' , in such passages as the following: This Asvattha tree with its roots above and branches below is eternal' (Ka. U., 6.1), and ' He who knows the tree with its roots above and branches below' (Tai. A., 1.11.5). It has its roots above since it has its roots in rahma (the Creator otherwise known as Hiranyagarbha) who is seated above the seven worlds. It has ' branches below' ending with denizens like men, animals, beasts, worms, insects, birds and immovables. It is ' immutable' since it cannot be felled, being of the form of a continual flow. It can be felled only at the dawn of perfect knowledge which causes detachment. They say that the leaves of this Asvattha tree constitute the Vedas. ' The Vedas are said to be the leaves' , since this tree of Samsara increases by actions prompted by worldly desires as taught in certain Srutis as, ' He who desires prosperity should sacrifice a white animal to Vayu' (Taitt. Sam., 2.1.1) and ' The desirer of offspring shall offer to Indra and Agni a sacrifice with eleven cups of rice-cakes' (Ibid., 2.2.1). Indeed the tree flourishes with the help of leaves. He who knows the Asvattha of such a nature ' knows the Vedas' . The Vedas also set forth the means of felling this tree of Samsara. He who understands this is called the knower of the Vedas, since knowledge of the nature of the tree to be cut off is helpful to the knowledge concerning the means of felling the tree. This tree spreads downward with men etc., who are the products of their Karma, as branches. It again spreads above into Gandharvas, Yaksas, gods, etc. They are nourished by the Gunas of Sattva etc. They have tender shoots augmented by sense-objects. How does this happen? Sri Krsna explains:

15.2 The ' secondary roots' of this tree having the main roots in the world of rahman and its crest in men ramify below in the world of men. They bind them according to their Karma. The meaning is that the effects of acts causing bondag become roots in the world of men. For, the effect of actions done in

the human state brings about the further condition of men, beasts etc., down below, and of divinities etc., up above.

15.3 - 15.4 The form of this tree, having its origin above, i.e., in the four-faced rahma and branches below in the sense that man forms the crest through continual lineage therefrom, and also having its branches extended above and below by actions done in the human state and forming secondary roots --- that form of the tree is not understood by people immersed in Samsara. Only this much is perceived: ' I am a man, the son of Devadatta, the father of Yajnadatta; I have property appropriate to these conditions' . Likewise, it is not understood that its destruction can be brought about by detachment from enjoyments which are based on Gunas. Similarly it is not perceived that attachment to the Gunas alone is the beginning of this (tree). Again, it is not perceived that the basis of this tree is founded on ignorance which is the misconception of self as non-self. Ignorance alone is the basis of this tree, since in it alone the tree is fixed. This Asvattha, described above, firm-rooted, i.e., the roots of which are firm and manifold, is to be cut off by the strong axe of detachment, namely, detachment from the sense objects composed of the three Gunas. This can be forged through perfect knowledge. As one gains detachment from sense-objects, one should seek and find out the goal from which nobody ever returns. How does this attachment to sense-objects, which consists of the Gunas and erroneous knowledge forming its cause, cease to exist? Sri Krsna now answers: One should seek ' refuge (Prapadyet) in the Primal Person' alone in order to overcome this ignorance. One should seek refuge (Prapadyeta) in Him who is primal, namely, the beginning of all entities, as stated in the following text: ' With Me as the Lord, the Prakrti gives birth to all that which moves, and that which does not move' (9.10), ' I am the origin of all; from Me proceed everything' (10.8), and ' There is nothing higher than Me, O Arjuna' (7.7). From Me, the creator of everything, has streamed forth this ancient activity, continuing from time immermorial, of attachment to sense-objects consisting of Gunas. This has been declared already by Me: ' For this divine Maya of Mine consisting of the Gunas is hard to break through. ut those who take refuge in me alone shall pass beyond this Maya' (7.14). Or a variant of this stanza is ' prapadya iyatah pravrttih' (in place of ' prapadyet yatah

pravrittih'). This gives the sense that this discipline of taking refuge in the Supreme Person for dispelling of ignorance has continued from a distant past. The tendencies of ancient persons seeking liberation are also ancient. The purport is this: The ancient liberation-seekers, taking refuge in Me alone, were released from bondage. [This can be taken to mean that Prapatti or taking refuge in the Lord had originated in the hakti tradition of the Sri-Vaisnavites from ancient sages i.e., from the Alvars who preceded Ramanuja by several centuries. It is not a creation of Ramanuja].

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15.5 Thus, when they have taken refute in Me, become free from ' perverse notions conerning the self' , namely, become free from the delusion in the form of misconceiving the non-self (body) as the self; ' victorious over the evil of attachment' , namely, victorious over the evil known as attachment to sense-objects consisting of the Gunas; ' ever devoted to self' , namely completely absorbed in the knowledge of the self which is called Adhyatma or knowledge about the self; when they have ' turned away from desires' other than this self-knowledge; when they are liberated from ' dualities called pleasure and pain' --- such ' undeluded souls' , namely, those who are able to discern the natures of self and non-self, attain to that ' imperishable status' . They attain the self as It is, in the form of infinite knowledge. Consequently for those who seek refuge in Me, all actions become easy of performance till perfection is attained by My grace.

15.6 The sun cannot illumine the light of the self, nor moon, nor fire. For, knowledge is indeed that which illumines them all. External lights, however, are helpful only in removing the darkness which hinders the contact between the senses and the objects. It is the intelligence of the self that reveals such external lights. What reveals this (i.e., the self) is Yoga (i.e., meditation) only.

eginningless Karma is the hindrance. It has been taught that the way for the erasing of Karma is self-surrender to the Lord through detachment etc. That supreme light, reaching which they do not return any more is the self, which is My glory (Vibhuti) and therefore belongs to Me and is a part of Myself. Such is the meaning. The supremacy of this light (i.e., individual self) consists in its capacity to illumine the light of knowledge. Knowledge alone can illuminate all things (including the light of the sun which sheds only physical light on objects.).

15.7 That self, whose nature has been described thus, though constituting an everlasting part of Myself, becomes the bound individual self in the world of life. Covered by ignorance in the form of beginningless Karma, It attracts to Itself the five senses and the mind, which are located in the bodies of gods, men etc., and which are particular transformations of Prakrti. Some parts of Myself (i.e., the selves), becoming free from ignorance (Avidya) in the aforesaid manner, remain in their own intrinsic nature. ut the bound individual self is very much contracted in power and knowledge. The individual self is the lord of the senses and the mind in bodies, and forms a bound individual in combination with a particular transformation of the Prakrti through Karma. Thus Karma attracts the selves hither and thither according to its nature.

15.8 Whatever body It acquires, and from whatever body It departs, the lord of the senses, i.e., the self, goes on Its way taking with It the senses with the subtle elements, just like the wind carrying scents from place to place. Just as the wind takes away scents with subtle parts from flower-garlands, sandal, musk and the rest from their places and moves elsewhere --- so does the self. What are these senses? Sri Krsna explains:

15.9 Presiding over these sense-organs, of which the mind is the sixth, the lord of the body drives the organs towards their corresponding objects like sound and the rest and enjoys them.

15.10 The deluded do not perceive the Atman (self) as a form of knowledge separate from Its human and other configurations which are particular

transformations of Prakrti, with which the self is conjoined when It is in embodied condition, experiencing the objects of the senses. The self also departs from the body when the body dies and assumes another body. The deluded or those who misconceive the body as the self do not understand all this. However, those who possess the eye of knowledge, i.e., have the knowledge concerning the difference between the body and the self, perceive the self as having a form different from the body in all conditions.

15.11 The ' striving Yogins' i.e., those striving in the path of Karma Yoga etc., after practising Prapatti (self-surrender), purify their inner organs of perception and percieve the self as established in Its own form as distinct from the body, with the eye of Yoga, ut those of ' unrefined minds,' namely those who do not practise Prapatti to Me, and are therefore of ' uncultivated minds, and devoid of intelligence' find themselves incapable of perceiving the self. They do not perceive It in distinction from the body. Thus, it has been said that the self, whether released or not, is a manifestation of the glory (Vibhuti) of the Lord, Its light of knowledge illuminates even the luminaries such as the sun, moon and fire which help the senses to see by removing the darkness that prevents the contact of the senses with their objects as described (in the verses): ' That supreme light ... is Mine' (15.6) and ' An everlasting part of Myself having become the (bound) self in the world of life' (15.7). Now, He declares that even the lights of the sun and other luminaries, which form particular developments of Prakrti, are Vibhutis of the Lord:

15.12 That brilliance of the sun and other luminaries which illumines the whole universe --- that brilliance belongs to Me. Know that this capacity of illumining is granted to them by Me who have been worshipped severally by them. Sri Krsna states that the power in the earth to support all those that reside on it belongs to Him alone:

15.13 Entering the earth I uphold all beings by My strength, namely, by My irresistible power, Likewise, becoming the Soma consisting of the juice of the nectar, I nourish all herbs.

15.14 Becoming the ' digestive fire' , or the fire of digestion, I function within the bodies of all living creatures. In union with various activities of ' inward and outward breaths' , I digest the ' four kinds of food' eaten by individuals. These consist of foods to be chewed, sucked, licked and drunk. The Supreme Person who has the Soma, digestive fire etc., as his glory (Vibhuti) is here equated with Him by means of co-ordinate predication in the verses ' ecoming the juicy Soma' and ' ecoming the digestive fire' . He now sets forth the reason for equating these glories with Himself.

15.15 Controlling everything by My will, I exist as ' the self in their hearts' , namely, in the place from which springs knowledge, the root of activity and inactivity of all beings as also of the Soma and digestive fire. So the Srutis declare in the following texts: ' Entering within, He is the ruler of all things and the Self of all' (Tai. A., 3.11), ' He who, dwelling in the earth ... He who, dwelling in the self, is within the self ... who controls the earth' (r. U. Madh., 3.7. 3. 22); ' The heart which is comparable to an inverted lotus-bud' (Ma. Na., 11.7); and ' Now, here, in the city of brahman, is an abode, a small lotus-flower' (Cha. U., 8.1.1). The Smrtis also declare thus: ' Visnu is the ruler of the whole universe, who permeates the universe' (V. P., 1.17. 20), ' He is the ruler of all, who is minutely small among those who are minutely small (Manu., 12.122); and ' He is the controller, the judge, the King, who is seated in your heart' (Ibid., 8.92). Therefore, the memory of all beings springs from Me alone. ' Memory' is knowledge springing from experience and its subtle impressions. They have for their contents past experiences. ' Knowledge' is determination of a thing through the senses, inference, the scriptures and intuitive meditation. This is also from Me. So does ' Apohana' too. ' Apohana' signifies the cessation of knowledge. ' Apohana' may also mean ' Uhana' (conjectural knowledge). Uhana is ' Uha' (conjecture). ' Uha' is that knowledge which is accessory to the actual means of knowledge (Pramana). It is done by determining whether that means of knowledge can be operative with reference to the particular subject-matter on hand, through the examination of the instruments of that means of knowledge (Pramana). This ' Uha' also comes from Me. Indeed ' I am to be known from all the Vedas,' for I am the inner ruler of Agni, Surya, Soma, Vayu, Sun and Indra and other divinities as their self. The Vedas are intent on

speaking of them (i.e., the divinities). ' I am to be known from all the Vedas; for, terms like gods, men etc., signify the individual selves in them. I bring about the fruition of the Veda. ' Vedanta' , here means the end, namely, the fruition, of Vedic injunctions like ' Let sacrifice be made to Indra' and ' Let sacrifice be made to Varuna.' For, all Vedas find their consummation in fruition. ' Antakrt' means grantor of fruits. The meaning is: ' I alone am the grantor of the fruition described in the Vedas.' This has been already declared in the verses beginning from, ' Whichever devotee seeks to worship with faith whatever form' and ending with, ' From that faith he gets the objects of his desire, granted in reality by Me alone' (7.21 - 22); and also ' I am the enjoyer and the only Lord of all sacrifices' (9.24). I am the knower of the Vedas; I know the Veda that speaks about Me. The sense is that he who speaks of the meaning of the Vedas as otherwise than this import, is not the knower of the Vedas. Therefore, listen from Me alone the meaning or the essene of the Vedas.

15.16 There are, the Sastras say, ' two kinds of Persons (Purusas)' well known in the world --- ' the perishable and the imperishable.' Of the two, the Persons designated by the term ' perishable' (Ksara) are beings conjoint with non-conscient matter of modifiable nature, from rahma down to a blade of grass,who can be signified also by the term Jivas (individual selves). Here the term Purusa (Person) is used in singular to indicate the common single condition of being conjoined with non-conscient matter. That which is the ' imperishable' (Aksara) is called ' unchanging' (Kutastha), this is the released self, devoid of association with non-conscient matter, remaining in its own form. It is called ' unchangeable' inasmuch as when free from non-conscient matter, It has no specific connection with particular transformations of non-conscient matter like the bodies of rahma etc. Here also the designation of the term in singular (as expressing a generic class) denoting the totality of liberated selves, is used on account of the single condition of dissociation from non-conscient matter. It does not mean that before this, in time without beginning, there existed but a single liberated self. So it is stated: ' Purified by the austerity of knowledge, many have attained My state' (4.10); and ' They are not born at the time of creation, nor do they suffer at the time of dissolution' (14.2).

15.17 But there is the ' Supreme Person who is other than the bound and liberated selves' expressed by the terms, the ' perishable' and the ' imperishable' . He forms a completely different category. All Srutis call Him the Supreme Self. ut by that very designation as the Supreme Self, it may be known that the Supreme Person is a category distinct from the bound and the liberated selves. How? ' Entering the threefold world,' supports it. ' Loka' (world) is that which is perceived. There are three such perceivable worlds, He enters the ' three worlds' which can be understood from the authority of the Srutis. These are the world of unconscient matter, the world of conscient selves conjoined with matter, and the world of liberated selves. As understandable from the Srutis, He enters into these three categories as their Atman and supports them. Thus, He is an entity different from the triad which He pervades and maintains. Further He is different, as He is imperishable and as He is the Lord. Being imperishable, He is different from the bound non-conscient matter whose nature is subject to decay. He is different from the bound conscient selves as the latter is subject to Prakrti and follows its laws. He is also distinguished from the liberated selves, because in their previous condition they were connected with matter and mixed with it. Similarly, He is the Lord of these ' three worlds,' a category distinct from those which have to be ruled.

15.18 Inasmuch as I transcend the perishable (i.e., bound) Person of the aforesaid nature, and I am higher, for reasons stated earlier, than the imperishable Person or liberated self, therefore I am styled the Supreme Person in the Smrti and Srutis. The Smrti is called Loka by reason of its leading to the meaning of the Vedas. The meaning is that I am famous in the Srutis and in the Smrti. In the Sruti for instance; ' Reaching the Supreme Light, it appears in its own nature. He is the Supreme Person' (Cha. U., 8.12.3). In the Smrti we have texts like ' I will approach Him (Sri Krsna), the Supreme Person who is the incarnation of a portion of Visnu, who is without beginning, middle or end' (V. P., 5.17.33).

15.19 He who, without delusion, knows the Supreme Person as Myself, as already stated, i.e., knows Me, as differing in kind from the perishable and the

imperishable Persons, because of My being immutable and because of My being distinguished from them as pervading, supporting and ruling etc., by nature --- such a devotee knows all. He knows all that is to be known as the means of attaining Me. He worships Me in ' every way,' i.e., whatever ways of worshipping Me have been prescribed as the means of attaining Me, he worships Me by all these modes of worship. Whatever love is evoked in Me towards one approaching Me by all forms of knowledge having Me for their object, and whatever love is roused up in Me towards those who practise various modes of worship having Me for their object --- all that in a unified form is generatd in Me towards one who has the knowledge of Me as described. Now, Sri Krsna eulogises this knowledge of the Supreme Person:

15.20 Thus, this Sastra, the most mysterious of all mysteries and which teaches My aspect as the Supreme Person, has been imparted to you by Me, as you are worthy to receive it because you are sinless. y understanding this, a man will become truly wise and will have fulfilled his duty. Whatever wisdom has to be cultivated for attaining Me, all that should be taken as cultivated and that whatever duty has to be fulfilled in that connection --- all that is to be taken as fulfilled by knowing this (the Purusottama Vidya). He gets all spiritual fulfilment by this knowledge, except the direct vision of Purusottama. [Probably the idea is that direct vision comes only when the body falls at the end of the quantum of Karma that has brought it into existence. Before that only the state of the Sthitaprajna can be attained. The thin veil of residual Karma still stands in the way.]

BHAGAVADGITA

English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda

Chapter 16

16.1 The Lord said -- ' Fear' is the pain arising from the awareness of the cause which brings about pain in the form of either dissociation from the objects of attainment or association with the objects of aversion. The absence of this is ' fearlessness' . ' Purity of mind' is the condition of Sattva, viz., the state of the internal organ being untouched by Rajas and Tamas. ' Devotion to meditation on the knowledge (of the self)' is firm adherence to the discrimination between the pure nature of the self and Prakrti. ' Alms-giving' is the giving away of one' s wealth earned through right means to the deserving. ' Self-control' is the practice of withdrawal of the mind from sense-objects. ' Worship' is the performance of the fivefold duties (sacrifices) etc., of life in the spirit of worship of the Lord without attachment to the fruits. The ' study of the Vedas' is devotion to the Vedic study with the conviction that all the teachings of the Vedas deal with the Lord, with His glorious nature and with the mode of worshipping Him. ' Austerity' is the practice of penances like Krchra, Candrayana, vow on the twelfth day of the lunar fortnight, etc., which foster capability for performing acts pleasing to the Lord. ' Uprightness' consists of the oneness of thought, word and deed in one' s dealings with others.

16.2 ' Non-injury' is abstaining from injury to others. ' Truth' is communication by words of what one knows for certain and what is conducive to the good of others. ' Freedom from anger' is the absence in oneself of the mental state, which, if permitted, leads to injury to others. ' Renunciation' is the abandonment of everything that is contrary to the good of the self. ' Tranquillity' is practice of controlling the senses from their propensity towards sense-objects. ' Not-slandering others' means refraining oneself from speech that may cause evil to others. ' Compassion to all beings' means one' s incapacity to stand the suffering of others. ' Aloluptvam' means freedom from desire for sense-objects. ' Gentleness' means absence of harshness, and being worthy of associating with the good. ' Sense of shame' is shrinking from doing what should not be done. ' Acapalam' means being unattracted by objects enjoyable by the senses

even when they are at hand.

16.3 ' Grandeur' is the quality by virtue of which one cannot be overpowered by the wicked. ' Forgiveness' is freedom from the feelings of antagonism towards others even when they cause injury to oneself. ' Fortitude' is the sense of determination to do one' s own duty even under conditions of great danger. ' Purity' is fitness of the body and the mind as prescribd in the scriptures for the performance of sacred deeds. ' Freedom from hatred' is non-interference with others, viz., absence of interference in the actions of others according to their wish. ' Over-pride' (Atimanita) is having unbridled self-esteem; freedom from misplaced pride is meant here. These are the virtues that are found in one who is born for the ' divine destiny.' The destiny associated with the divinities is divine. The divinities are those who are devoted to carry out the commandments of the Lord. It is their destiny. It is obedience to the commandments of the Lord. The meaning is that these are endowments in those who are born with a tendency or disposition towards them and seek to attain their fulfilment.

16.4 ' Dambha or pomposity' is the practice of Dharma for earning a reputation for righteousness. ' Arrogance' is the elation caused by the pleasures of sense-objects and the consequent inability to discriminate between what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. ' Self-conceit' is the estimation of oneself in a measure not warranted by one' s education and birth. ' Wrath' is the sense of antagonism causing injury to others. ' Rudeness' is the nature of causing grief to Sadhus. ' Ignorance' is incapacity to discriminate between hight and low forms of conduct and principles, and also between what ought to be done and what ought not to be. These are the qualities that are found in one born for a demoniac destiny. Asuras are those who rebel against the commandments of the Lord.

16.5 ' The divine destiny,' viz., which is of the nature of submission to My commandments aids liberation, viz., leads to release from bondage. The meaning is that it leads to the eventual attainment of Myself. ' The demoniac destiny' viz, which is of the nature of transgression of My commandments, is

for bondage, i.e., takes one to degradation. To Arjuna who, on hearing this, became alarmed and anxious about the classfication of his own nature, Sri Krsna said: ' Do not be grief-ridden. Surely, you are born for a divine destiny, O son of Pandu. The purport is that you have a divine destiny, since you are a son of Pandu who was most eminent among the righteous.

16.6 In this world of works, there are ' two tpyes'   of created beings who perform actions, viz., the divine and demoniac. Creation is production. y the force of old Karma of the nature of good and evil deeds, beings are born, divided into two kinds at their very birth for working out the commandments of the Lord or act contrary to them. Such is the meaning. Of these, the divine destiny has been told at length. For the purpose of working out their destiny in accordance with the mode of conduct, the creation of the godly, viz., of those devoted to My commandments, occurs; that mode of condut, composed of Karma-jnana-and-hakti-Yogas has been described at length. To follow what conducts leads to the creation of demons --- listen about that conduct.

16.7 The demoniac men do not know the ' path of action and renunciation,'   viz., the Vedic Dharma that leads to prosperity and final release. ' Cleanliness'   is the competence for performing Vedic rites as established in the Sastras. That ' cleanliness,'   be it external or internal, is alien to the demoniac. Nor ' right conduct,'   viz., that right conduct such as twilight prayers (Sandhya-vandana) etc., by means of which this internal and external cleanliness arises --- even that right conduct is alien to them. For it is declared in: ' He who does not perform twilight prayers, is always unholy and is unfit for any rites'   (Daksha Sm., 2.23). Likewise, ' truth'   is not found among them, viz., that truthful speech, which is conducive to the welfare of beings and which is in accordance with one' s actual knowledge, does not characterise them. Moreover:

16.8 They maintain that the universe is ' without truth,'   viz., they do not accept that this universe, which is the effect of rahman denoted by the term Satya, has rahman for its Self. They contend that it is bereft of any ' foundation,'   viz., they do not accept that it has rahman for its foundation. rahman as Ananta supports the earth and bears all the worlds, as declared in ' This earth,

sustained upon the head of this great serpent, supports in its turn, this garland of worlds, along with their men, demons and gods' (V.P., 2.5.27). They say that it is ' without a Lord,' viz. they don' t accept that this universe is controlled by Me, the Lord of all, the Supreme rahman, whose will is always true. It has been already averred: ' I am the origin of all; from Me proceed everything' (10.8). And they also contend thus: ' What else can exist without mutual causation?' i.e., except by the union of the male and the female among men, beasts etc. What else exists apart from this nature? The meaning is that nothing else is seen. Therefore the entire world is rooted in sexual lust.

16.9 Holding this view, viz., supporting this view, these men of lost souls do not realise that the self is different from the body. They are of ' feeble understanding,' they lack the discernment that the self is to be known as different from the body, because of Its being the knower in the body which is an object of knowledge such as jars etc. These are of ' cruel deeds' viz., they do much harm to everybody; they are born to bring ruin to the world.

16.10 Turning to ' insatiable desires,' viz., which concern objects impossible to get; seizing through ' delusion,' viz., through ignorance that such desires can be fulfilled only with ' unjustly acquired wealth,' viz., with wealth unlawfully hoarded, and following impious vows, viz., associated with the vows prohibited in the Sastras; they do actions ' that are full of ostentation, pride and arrogance.'

16.11 Those who are sure to die today or tomorrow ' obsess themselves with cares' in regard to objects the attainment of which is not possible even by the time of death. Likewise, they look upon ' enjoyment of desires' as their highest aim, viz., they regard the satisfaction of sensual enjoyments as the highest aim of human life. They are convinced that this is all, viz., they are assured that there is no value in human life greater than this.

16.12 They are ' bound by hundreds of fetters of hope,' viz., bound by hundreds of fetters in the form of hope. They are given over to ' desire and anger,' viz., they are intent solely on desire and anger. To satisfy their sensual

desires, they endeavour for wealth through immortal means.

16.13 This land, sons etc., have I gained solely by my ability and not by the help of any higher force. I shall attain this desire also myself and not by good fortune or any other means. This wealth, gained solely by my ability, is with me. And this also shall be mine through my own ability.

16.14 This enemy has been slain by me, powerful as I am. I shall slay other enemies also --- I who am heroic and valiant. What is the use of the conception of destiny, which is only an imagination of weak people of little understanding? Similarly: I am ' the lord,' viz., I am independent, and I am also the ruler of others. I am the ' enjoyer,' viz., I am the enjoyer through my own powers, and not through good fortune etc. I am ' successful,' viz., I am successful by myself and not through any destiny etc. Likewise, I am strong and happy by myself.

16.15 ' I am rich by myself. Who else is there in this world like me gaining all glory with his own ability? I myself shall sacrifice, I shall give alms and I shall rejoice' --- thus they think deluded by ignorance, viz., deluded by ignorance that they are themselves capable of offering sacrifices, gifts etc., unaided by the grace of God.

16.16 As do not accept the need for the help of past Karma and the Lord for their achievements and believe them to be only due to their own efforts, they are ' bewildered' by many thoughts, ' Thus I shall do, this I shall accomplish, and still another I shall achieve.' In this way they are ensnared by the net of delusion. Highly addicted to sensual enjoyments, they die in the middle of such enjoyments and fall into foul Naraka [Naraka is sometimes translated as hell. This is the Christian conception. In the Hindu view it is purgatory where through intense sufferings the Jiva is purged of sins].

16.17 They are held in ' high esteem by themselves' ; the meaning is they are full of the sense of self-esteem. They feel self-sufficient, viz., regarding themselves as perfect, they do nothing. How? They are ' possessed of the

intoxication of wealth and pride,'   viz., they are intoxicated by wealth and pride of wealth, learning and descent. They perform sacrifices in name only,'   viz., they perform sacrifices for the fame of it, the purpose being gaining fame as the performers of sacrifice. These are performed for ostentation acutated with the motive of becoming famous as the performers of sacrifices and not in accordance with the proper rulesof the Sastras, viz., without regard to any commandment. Sri Krsna says that they perform sacrifices in the following manner:

16.18 They depend on their egoism in the form of ' I can do everything without the help of anyone' ; likewise, in performing everything they depend on their power, ' My power is sufficient' ; hence pride takes the following form, ' There is nobody like myself. Desire takes the form of, ' because I am so, everything is fulfilled by my mere desire.'   ' Wrath consits in conceiving, ' I shall slay those who cause evil to me.'   Thus, depending on themselves, they evince malice towards Me, the Supreme Person abiding in their own bodies as well as in the bodies of others; and they hate Me. They endeavour to invent fallacious arguments against My existence, and being unable to tolerate Me, they perform all acts like sacrifices etc., depending only on their egoism.

16.19 Those who hate Me in this manner, I hurl them, the cruel, inauspicious and the vilest of mankind into the cycle of births and deaths for ever, viz., old age, death etc., revolving again and again, and even there into demoniac wombs. I hurl them into births, antagonistic to any friendliness towards Me. The meaning is that I shall connect them to cruel minds as would impel them to actions which lead them to the attainment of cursed births.

16.20 ' These deluded men,'   viz., those entertaining perverse knowledge about Me, attain repeatedly births that tend them to be antagonistic to Me. Never ' attaining Me,'   viz., never arriving at the knowledge that Vasudeva, the Lord and the ruler of all, truly exists, they go farther and farther down, from that birth, to the lowest level. Sri Krsna proceeds to explain the root-cause of the ruin to the self of demoniac nature:

16.21 Those three which constitute the ' gateway of this hell' in the shape of demoniac nature, and are destructive of the self (Atman) --- are known as desire, wrath and greed. The nature of these has already been explained. ' Gateway' (Dvara) means the path, the cause. Therefore, one should renounce these three. Therefore, since they constitute the cause of the extremely dreadful Naraka, one should wholly renounce this triad --- desire, wrath and greed.

16.22 One who has been ' released from these three' --- from desire, wrath and greed which constitute the gates of darkness causing erroneous knowledge of Myself ---, he works for the good of the self. Gaining knowledge of Myself, he endevaours to be inclined towards Me. From there, he attains the supreme goal, which is Myself. Sri Krsna now teaches that the main cause of this Kind of degeneration is lack of reverence for the Sastras:

16.23 Here Sastra means Vedas. Vidhi stands for injunction. He who abandons My injunction called Vedas and acts under the influence of desire, viz., takes the path according to his own wishes, does not attain perfection, He does not reach any Siddhi in the next world, nor does he find the slighest happiness in this world, let alone the attainment of the supreme state. It is not possible for him to do so. Such is the meaning.

16.24 Hence, the Sastra is to be the only authority for you in determining what should be done and what should not be done, viz., in deciding what ought to be accepted and what ought not be accepted. You should know, i.e., understand, neither more nor less than what constitutes the truth and the work enjoined in the injunctions of the Sastras which the Highest Reality called the Supreme Person revealed in the Vedas. The Vedic injunctions are supplemented by the Dharma-sastras, the Itihasas and the Puranas. The acts enjoined by them are the means for reaching Him and for pleasing Him. You should perform them; you should accept them alone.

BHAGAVADGITA

English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda

Chapter 17

17.1 Arjuna said -- Those who, ' filled with faith but laying aside the injunctions of the Sastras,' engage themselves in sacrifices etc., what is their ' position or basis' ? It is Sattva, Rajas or Tamas? Nistha means Sthiti. What is called Sthiti is that state in which one abides, has one' s position or basis. Do they abide in Sattva, in Rajas or in Tamas? Such is the meaning of the question. Thus questioned, the Lord, for affirming the futility of faith and of sacrifices not enjoined in the Sastras, and in order to show that the triple division in accordance with the Gunas refers only to sacrifices etc., enjoined in the Sastras --- expounds here the threefold nature of faith enjoined in the Sastras:

17.2 The Lord said -- ' Threefold is the faith among all' embodied beings. And it arises from their ' inborn nature.' What is called Svabhava is the state unique to one' s own nature. It is the special taste or predilection caused by previous subtle impressions, ' Vasanas.' To whatever one' s predilection is directed, there faith is born in respect of it. For ' faith' is zeal or eagerness about any means in the belief that it is the way of action to achieve one' s own desired object. Vasana (subtle impression), Ruci (taste) and Sraddha (faith) are the qualities of the self born from its association with the Gunas. The Sattva and the other Gunas are the qualities of the body, the senses, the internal organs and sense-objects. They bring about their qualities in the self associated with them. These are the Vasanas. These Gunas can be described only by their effects. These (i.e., Vasanas etc.) originate from experiences with the body etc., having origination in Sattva and other Gunas. Thus faith is threefold as marked by Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Listen about this faith.

17.3 ' Sattva' means internal organ (i.e., mind). The faith of everyone is according to his internal organ. The meaning is that with whatever Guna his internal organ is conjoined, one' s faith corresponds to that Guna (i.e., Guna as object). The term Sattva covers here body, senses etc., already mentioned.

Man consists of faith, viz., is the product of his faith. Of whatever faith he is, viz., with whatever faith a man is possessed, that verily he is; he is a transformation of faith of that nature. The purport is this: If the person is associated with faith in auspicious acts he becomes associated with fruit of these auspicious acts. Consequently, attainment chiefly follows one' s faith. Sri Krsna further explains the same subject:

17.4 ' Those who have abundance of Sattva quality and are conjoined with Sattvika faith worship the gods. The meaning is this: The faith in the worship (sacrifice) of the gods which causes supreme joy unmixed with pain is of Sattvika nature. The Rajasika types worship Yaksas and Raksasas. And the others, i.e., the Tamasika types, worship the departed ancestors and hosts of hutas. The faith born of Rajas brings about limited joy mixed with pain, while the faith born of Tamas gives rise to extremely limited joy which verges almost on pain. Therefore, there is difference in fruits according to the Gunas regarding sacrifices etc., which are enjoined in the Sastras and associated with faith. However, no happiness whatsoever will result from penances, sacrifices etc., not enjoined in the Sastras and therefore antagonistic to My commandment. On the contrary, calamity results from them. Sri Krsna proceeds to explain this more fully.

17.5 - 17.6 ' Those men who perform terrible pernances not enjoined by the Sastras' --- this is illustrative of sacrifices etc., of a similar nature. Those who perform sacrifices, etc., sacrifices which are not enjoined by the Sastras and demand much exertion, those who are possessed of ' ostentation and conceit and are goaded by sensual desire, attachment and passion' --- they torture the group of elements such as earth etc., in their bodies. They also torture the individual self which is a part of Myself and is within their bodies. Those who perform such sacrifices etc., know them to be demoniacal in their resolves. The resolve of demons is demoniac resolve. The demons are those who act contrary to My commandments. Since they act contrary to My commandments, they do not have even a iota of joy, but as stated earlier, they fall a prey to a multitude of calamities. ' They fall into a foul Naraka' (16.16). Now, Sri Krsna, resuming the subject, details the differences according to the Gunas with

reference to sacrifice, etc., enjoined by the Sastras. To begin with, he describes three kinds of food, since the growth of Sattva etc., has its source in food, as Srutis declare thus: ' For my dear, the mind consists of food' (Cha. U., 6.5.4) and ' when the food is pure, the man becomes pure' (Cha. U., 7.26.2).

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17.7 Even the food which is dear to the host of all beings is of three kinds because of the association of the three Gunas consisting of Sattva etc. Similarly, sacrifices also are of three kinds. So too austerity and charity. Listen about this distinction, which is being described, about foods, sacrifices, austerities and gifts according to differences of Sattva etc.

17.8 To a man endowed with Sattva, foods preponderating in Sattva become dear. The foods preponderating in Sattva promote longevity. Again they promote intellectual alertness. ' Sattva' , means internal organ, viz., knowledge which is the effect of the internal organ is here meant by the term Sattva. For the Sattva is the cause of growth of knowledge, as declared in: ' From Sattva

arises knowledge' (14.17). Even as the food preponderant in Sattva is the cause of the growth of knowledge, likewise, they promote strength and health; they also promote pleasure and happiness. As the time of assimilation they, by themselves, promote happiness, viz, by the performance of actions which cause happiness. They are sweet, viz., abundant in sweet juices. They are mixed with oil, viz., wholly oily. They are substantial, viz., they originate substantial effects. They are agreeable viz., they appear to the eye in beautiful forms. Food of this kind, full of Sattva-guna, is dear to the person characterised by Sattva.

17.9 The foods that are bitter, sour, very salty, over-hot, very pungent, dry and burning, are those that they the taste (Rasa) of bitterness and sourness, that are inordinately salty, hot, pungent, and that are dry and burning. Pungent foods are those which are unsuitable and difficult to be taken by others because of their being ver cold, ver hot etc. Dry things are those which cause the feeling of dryness in the eater. urning foods are those which cause burning sensation. Foods of this kind are relished by men of Rajasik nature. They promote pain, sorrow and disease.

17.10 Stale (Yatayamam) means that food which has lost its original state, being kept for a long time. Tasteless (Gatarasam) means that which has lost its natural taste. Putrid (Puti) means emitting a bad smell. Decayed (Paryusitam) means acquiring a rancidity by lapse of time. Refuse (Ucchistam) means the food that has remained over after being partaken by persons other than Gurus, etc. Unclean (Amedhyam) is that which is not fit for offering in sacrifice or worship. The meaning is that, being unfit for offering in worship, they cannot become the sacrificial remainder. Foods of this kind which promote the growth of Tamas are dear to those who are characterised by Tamas. Food (hojana) means that which is eaten. Tamasik food promotes further increase of Tamas. Hence, those persons who care for their own welfare by the growth of Sattva, should eat food charaterised by Sattva.

17.11 That sacrifice is marked by Sattva which is offered by those desiring no fruits, with the ' conviction' , i.e., with the idea that it ought to be performed or

that it should be offered for its own sake as worship of the Lord as enjoined in the injunctions of the Sastras, i.e., with hymns, right materials and proper rituals.

17.12 That sacrifice, performed to gain fruits, full of ostentation and with fame as its aim, know that sacrifice to be characterised by Rajas.

17.13 They say that sacrifice is Tamasa, which is bereft of the authority of injunction of rahmanas of learning and good conduct as ' Do this sacrifice,' which is ' Asrstanna' viz., which uses offerings (materials) not sanctioned by the Sastras; which is performed without recitation of hymns; and which is bereft of gifts and faith. Now, to explain the threefold division of austerities according to their source in the Gunas, Sri Krsna describes their differences in respect of the body, speech and mind:

17.14 The worship of the gods, the twice-born, preceptors and enlightened ones; purity, viz., by ablutions in sacred water; uprightness, viz., bodily action in accordance with the mind; continence, viz., absence of looking at women etc., considering them as objcts of pleasure; non-injury, viz., not hurting any being --- these constitute the austerity of the body.

17.15 Verbal austerity consists in using words that do not hurt others, are true, are pleasing and are beneficial. It also involves studying scriptural texts.

17.16 Serenity of mind, viz., absence of wrath etc., practice of benevolence, viz., the direction of the mind for the good of others, silence, viz., contorl of speech by the mind; self-control, viz., focusing the activity of the mind on the object of contemplation; purity of mind, viz., absence of thought about subjects other than the self --- these constitute the austerity of the mind.

17.17 The threefold austerity practised with supreme faith through the body, speech and mind by men who have no thoughts of any reward and who are devoted, viz., are imbued with the thought that it is the worship of the Supreme Person, they call such austerity as Sattvika.

17.18 ' Respect' means recognition by others. ' Praise' means verbal adulation. ' Reverence' means corporeal actions such as prostration etc. That austerity, practised with expectation of rewards like respect, etc., mentioned above --- it is here said to be Rajasa. It is unsteady and impermanent, because of the temporary nature of its rewards like heaven etc.; ' unsteadiness' is the result of the fear of falling. ' Impermanent' means the tendency to perish.

17.19 Deluded persons are those who lack correct understanding. That austerity which is practised from deluded notion, viz., from the obstinate determination by deluded persons, by self-torture regardless of one' s own capacity or which is performed for causing sufferings to others --- that is said to be Tamasika.

17.20 Gifts given without thought of return of favours and with the feelings, ' These gifts must be given,' at the proper places and time to a worthy person who makes no return --- such gifts are said to be Sattvika.

17.21 That gift which is given grudgingly, viz., gift of useless things with a sly expectation of something in return that is said to be gift of Rajasa nature.

17.22 That gift which is given to unworthy recipients at wrong place and time, without due respect, viz., without showing such signs of respect as cleansing the feet; with contempt, viz., with disdain and without courtesy --- that is said to be of Tamasa nature. So far, the divisions due to differences of Gunas in respect of sacrifices, austerities and gifts as enjoined by the Vedas have been portrayed. Now is given the definition of Vedic sacrifices etc., according to their association with Pranava (i.e., the syllable Om), and as signified by the terms Tat and Sat.

17.23 Here rahman means the Veda. It is the secondary meaning of the expression, especially of the ritualistic portion of the Veda. The three-fold expression Om Tat Sat is connected with the rahman or the Veda. Sacrifices and similar rituals are prescribed in the Vedas. These expressions Om Tat Sat

are used in these Vedic rites. The connection of Om is that it should be invariably used at the commencement of the recitation of Vedic hymns. The syllable Tat and Sat indicate that these rituals are worthy of honour. The rahmanas are those who are to preserve Vedic study as also the Vedas and the sacrificial rites ordained in them. All these were created by Me in the past. Sri Krsna elaborates in the next verses the nature of the connection of these syllables with the Vedic rituals, beginning first with Om.

17.24 After pronouncing Om, the Vedas are recited. Thus the connection of the syllable Om with the Vedas and the rituals enjoined in the Vedas such as sacrifices has been described. As the Vedas are connected with the word Om, all belonging to the three stations of life who memorise the Vedas and perform the rituals inculcated in them, are included in the expression, ' expounders of the Vedas.' Now, He describes the manner by which the word Tat is connected with them:

17.25 Whatever acts such as the study of the Vedas, sacrifices, austerities and gifts are done without aiming at results by those of the first three stations, seeking only final release --- these are designated by the term Tat referring to the brahman, since they constitute the means for attainment of brahman. For it is well known that the term Tat signifies brahman, as in the following passage: He is Sah,Vah, Kah, Kim, Yat, Tat, Padam, Anuttamam.' (M.., 13.254.91). Thus, the study of the Vedas, sacrifices etc., which are the means of attaining release, have been stated; the connection of Tat has been spoken of since the word Tat signifies them (i.e., the study of Vedas etc.). The connection of the term Tat with the three stations is shown because of their practising the study of the Vedas etc., in the way stated. In order to show how the term Sat is connected with these, Sri Krsna shows the etymology of the term Sat, as it is prevalent in the world:

17.26 The word Sat is applied in Vedic and common usage, in respect of all contexts to express existence (Sadbhava) and auspiciousness (Sadhubhava). Similarly, in relation to any praiseworthy worldly act, viz., auspicious undertaking by someone, the word Sat is applied to express, ' This is a good

act.'

17.27 Therefore, devotion of persons of the first three stations who follow the Vedas in respect of sacrifices, austerities and gifts is called Sat, since it is auspicious. So the Vedas, Vedic acts and the three stations, expressed by the term ' brahmana,' since they are characterised by their connection with the words ' Om Tat Sat,' are to be distinguished from what are not the Vedas and Vedic.

17.28 Offerings etc., when performed without faith, are Asat (i.e., unreal, bereft of efficiency), although they might be what has been enjoined by the Sastras. Why so? ecause it is naught here or hereafter; it will not lead to release nor to any desirable result in Samsara.

BHAGAVADGITA

English translation of Sri Ramanuja' s Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Adidevananda

Chapter 18

18.1 Arjuna said -- oth Sannyasa and Tyaga as a means for release are enjoined in such Srutis: ' Not by rituals, nor by progeny, nor by rituals, nor by progeny, nor by wealth but by Tyaga alone do some attain immortality ...' (Ma. Na., 5.14). Ascertaining the truth about the Supreme Reality from a knowledge of Vedanta, and becoming purified in mind by the means of Sannyasa Yoga, these Yatis (ascetics), at the dissolution of their bodies, attain the Lord who is higher than the freed selves and become liberated from bondage' (Man. U., 3.2.6). I want to know separately the truth, viz., whether Tyaga and Sannyasa are synonymous or not. The import is this. Do these two terms Sannyasa and Tyaga have different meanings or do they signify the same thing? If they signify different things, I want to know their different natures. If they are synonymous, their identical nature should be elucidated. Then, in order to prove that the nature of both is identical and that it is such and such, the Lord explains, showing the disagreements among some disputants:

18.2 The Lord said -- Some scholars understand that Sannyasa is complete relinquishment of desire-prompted acts. Some other wise men say that the meaning of the term Tyaga, according to the Sastras dealing with release, is relinquishment of the fruits not only of all desiderative (Kamya), but also of obligatory and occasional, duties . Here, the problem is, whether the Tyaga taught in the Sastras concern desiderative acts themselves, or fruits of all acts. Sri Krsna has used the terms Sannyasa in one place and Tyaga elsewhere. From this it is understood that Sri Krsna uses the terms Tyaga and Sannyasa as synonyms. Likewise, the decisive teaching is about Tyaga alone in the statement: ' Hear My decision, O Arjuna, about Tyaga' (18.4). That the terms are synonymously used to denote the same sense, is conclusively established from such passages as: ' ut the renunciation (Sannyasa) of obligatory work is not proper. Abandonment (Tyaga) of it through delusion is declared to be Tamasika' (18.7); and ' To those who have not renounced the fruits of actions, threefold are the consequences after death --- undesirable, desriable and

mixed. ut to those who have renounced, none whatsoever' (18.12).

18.3 Some sages, viz., the adherents of Kapila and those Vaidikas who agree with his creed, contend that all acts such as sacrifices etc., should be renounced by aspirants for release, as they bind even as desires and other similar defects tend to bind. Other learned men say that acts like sacrifices etc., should not be renounced.

18.4 Regarding contradictory versions on Tyaga among disputants, listen from Me My decision. Tyaga has been described by Me in respect of actions prescribed by the scriptures from three points of view: (1) as referring to fruits, (2) as referring to acts themselves and, (3) as referring to agency. It is contained in the statement, ' Surrendering all your actions to Me with a mind focussed on the self,' and ' Free from desire and selfishness and cured of fever --- fight' (3.30). The renunciation of fruits consists in the following manner. ' Heaven and such other results arising from acts do not belong to Me.' Renunciation of acts is complete abandonment of the sense of possession in regard to one' s acts. This sense of possession is of the following nature: ' Those acts are mine on account of their being the means for fruits which are to be mine.' Renunciation referring to agency is the renunciation of agency of oneself by ascribing the agency to the Lord of all.

18.5 Acts such as sacrifices, gifts, austerities etc., enjoined in the Vedas should not be relinquished by the aspirant for release, but should be performed day after day until his death. Why? Acts like sacrifices, gifts and austerities associated with the different stations of life, are the means of purification for the wise., i.e., for those given to contemplation. Contemplation is worship. For the aspirants who perform such worship (Upasana) throughout their lives, they (sacrifices etc.) are a help to erase the previous Karmas which stand in the way of the fulfilment of such worship.

18.6 Since sacrifices, gifts, austerities etc., are the means for the purification of the wise, therefore, it is My decided and final view that they should be performed as a part of my worship until one' s death, renouncing attachment,

viz., possessiveness towards actions and their fruits.

18.7 Obligatory acts consist of daily, and occasional ceremonies like the five great sacrifices; their abandonment is not proper, for without actions even the sustenance of the body would be impossible, as already stated: ' From no-work, not even the body can be sustained' (3.8). The sustenance of the body by eating the sacrificial remnants produces perfect knowledge. Otherwise, as declared in the statement, ' ut the sinful ones eat sin' (3.13). The satisfaction that comes by eating food which is not the remnant of sacrifice and which is therefore of the form of sin, is productive of erroneous knowledge in the mind. For, as declared in the Sruti, ' The mind consists of food' (Cha. U., 6.5.4), the mind is sustained by food. Also, there is the Sruti text, ' When the food is pure, the mind becomes pure; when the mind is pure, remembrance becomes firmly fixed; and when remembrance is acquired, there is release from all knots of the heart' (Ibid., 7.26.2). It is therefore proved by the Sruti that knowledge of the form of direct perception of rahman, is dependent on the purity of food. Hence the great sacrifices and such other obligatory and occasional rites are worthy of adoption till one' s death, as they help in the knowledge of the rahman. The renunciation of these is therefore not proper. Thus, the relinquishment of these acts which produce knowledge through the delusion that they bind the self, is rooted in Tamas. Tamasika renunciation has its roots in Tamas. Since such renunciation has its roots in ignorance which is the effect of Tamas, such renunciation is said to have its roots in Tamas. For Tamas is the root of ignorance as has been stated: ' From Tamas arise negligence and delusion, and also, ignorance' (14.17). Ignorance is erroneous knowledge which is antagonistic to right knowledge. So, it will be taught, ' That reason which, enveloped in Tamas, regards wrong as right, and which reverses every value, O Arjuna, is Tamasika' (18.32). It is for this reason that the renunciation of obligatory and occasional actions are said to have their roots in erroneous knowledge.

18.8 Although actions constitute the indirect menas for release, yet they produce mental depression, since they can be done only by collecting materials involving painful effort and since they cause bodily strain on account

of their requiring strenuous exertion. If, on account of such fear, one decides that the practice of knowledge alone should be tried for perfection in Yoga, and abandons actions like the great sacrifices applicable to one' s station in life, he practises renunciation rooted in Rajas. Since that is not the meaning of the Sastras, one cannot win the fruit of renunciation in the form of the rise of knowledge. So it will be shown further one: ' That reason by which one erroneously knows, O Arjuna, is Rajasika' (18.31). In fact, actions do not directly cause purity of the mind but indirectly by winning the grace of God.

18.9 When rites like obligatory and occasional ceremonies and the great sacrifices enjoined on one' s station and stage in life, are practised for their own sake, as worship of Myself and as a duty, relinquishing possessiveness and fruits --- such abandonment is regarded as Sattvika. It is noted in Sattva. The idea is that it is rooted in the knowledge of the meaning of the Sastras as it really is. That Sattva generates the knowledge of things as they really are, has been taught in: ' From Sattva arises knowledge' (14.17), and it will be further declared: ' That reason by which one knows action and renunciation, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and release, O Arjuna, is Sattvika' (18.30).

18.10 Thus, ' filled with Sattva,' endowed with right knowledge, i.e., with the knowledge of the reality as it is, and as a consequence of it ' having all doubts shattered' --- he alone becomes a renouncer of attachment to work and the fruits of work. He ' neither hates works productive of harmful effects,' nor ' loves others productive of worldly prosperity.' Disagreeable acts are fraught with undesirable fruits; and agreeable acts bring about desirable results such as heaven, sons, cows, food etc. On account of his renouncing all results other than the rahman and on account of his renouncing the sense of agency, he shows neither love nor hatred for above-mentioned types of works. Here ' sinful acts having undesirable fruits' are only such acts as are inadvertently performed. For it has been taught in the Srutis that nor turning away from bad conduct is antagonistic to the production of knowledge. ' ut one who has not ceased from bad conduct, who is not tranquil, is not composed, is not of peaceful mind, cannot obtain Him by knowledge' (Ka. U., 1.2.24). Thus, ' the

abandonment' according to the Sastras is renunciation of the sense of agency, attachment and fruits of actions, and not total relinquishment of actions as such. He explains this further:

18.11 It is impossible for one who has a body and has to nourish it. ' to abandon action entirely' ; for eating, drinking etc., required for nourshing the body and other acts connected therewith are unavoidable. And for the same reason the five great sacrifices etc., are also indispensable. He who has given up the fruits of the five great sacrifices, is said to have renounced; this is referred to in the Srutis such as: ' Only through renunciation do some obtain immortality' (Ma. Na., 8.14). Renunciation of fruits of actions is illustrative; it implies much more. It implies one who has renounced the fruits, agency and attachment to works, as the topic has been begun with the declaration: ' For abandonment (Tyaga) is declard to be of three kinds' (18.4). This statement may be questioned in the following manner: ' Agnihotra, the full moon and new moon sacrifices, Jyotistoma etc., and also the five great sacrifices are enjoined by the Sastras only for the attainment of their results like heaven. They are not purposeless. Even the injunction with regard to obligatory and occasional ceremonies is enjoined because they yield results, as implied in the following passage: For

18.12 The ' undesirable result' is Naraka etc., ' the desirable' is heaven etc., ' the mixed' is sons, cows, food etc., which are combined with some undesirable results. Those who have not renounced, namely, those who are devoid of renunciation of agency, possessiveness and fruits --- they meet with threefold consequences after death. The meaning of ' after death' (Pretya) may be understood as subsequent to the performance of actions. ut ' to those who have renounced, none whatsoever,' viz., to those who have relinquished the sense of agency etc., no such results antagonistic to release accrue. Here the purport is this: Agnihotra, the great sacrifices etc. are obligatory throughout life and are required for attaining the objects of desire; but in regard to release their application is different. Though externally they appear to be the same in their nature in both the conditions, they are different in their fruits by virtue of difference in application. Their application to release is seen in such texts as

' The rahmanas desire to know Him by the study of the Vedas, by sacrifices, by gifts, by austerities conjoined with fasting'   (r. U., 4.4.22). Here the performance of actions without sense of agency is enforced. Such giving up agency etc., are relevant only with regard to acts that are actually performed. Thus Sannyasa or renouncing of this kind is established in the Sastras. The same is also called Tyaga or giving up. Sri Krsna now explains the manner of realising that one is non-agent, by attributing all agency to God, who is the Supreme Person and the Inner Ruler, y cultivating this attitude, an aspirant can attain the renunciation of possessiveness with regard to actions and also their fruits. For it is the Supreme Person who performs all actions through the individual selves who belong to Him. The organs, bodies and Pranas of embodied beings are His. They exist for the sake of His own sport as the only purpose. Therefore, even the appeasement of hunger etc., and such other acts which affect the life of the individual souls and their works constitute only the means for accomplishing that purpose, namely, the sport of the Highest Purusa Himself. The purport of the argument is this: The analogy of seeds producing the tree and its fruits is not applicable to the actions of release-seekers. Their actions may look like those of fruit-seekers externally. ut as mentally they do not entertain any such purpose, the consequence of their actions can be quite different. The purpose served by their actions is only affording sport for the Supreme eing.

18.13 ' Sankhya'   means uddhi (reasoning). ' Sankhya-krtanta'   means that which is determined after due deliberations by the uddhi in accordance with the Vedas on the nature of the things as they are. Learn them from Me. There are five causes for the accomplishment of all actions. ut the understanding according to the Vedas (Vaidiki-buddhi) is that the Supreme Self alone is the agent working through body, senses, Pranas and the individual self, as asserted in the following Srutis: ' He who, dwelling in the self, who rules the self from within your self, the Inner Ruler, immortal'   (r. U. Madh., 3.7.22), and ' He who has penetrated the interior, is the Ruler of all creatures and the Self of all'   (Tai. A., 3.11.3). Sri Krsna nows sets forth the five causes:

18.14 - 18.15 For all actions, performed through body, words or mind, whether they be authorized by the Sastras or not, the causes are these five. (1) The body, which is a conglomeration of the ' great elements,' is known as the seat, since it is governed by the individual self. (2) The agent is the individual self. That this individual self is the knower and the agent is established in the Vedanta-Sutras: ' For this reason, (the individual self) is the knower' (2.3.18) and ' The agent, on account of the scripture having a purport' (2.3.33.). (3) The organs of various kinds are the five motor organs like that of speech, hands, feet etc., along with the mind. They are of various kinds, viz., they have different functions in completing an action. (4) The different and distinctive functions of vital air --- here the expression ' functions' (Cesta) means several functions. Distinctive are the functions of this fivefold vital air which sustains the body and senses through its divisions of Prana, Apana etc. (5) Divinity is the fifth among these causes. The purport is this: Among these, which constitute the conglomeration of causes of work the Divinity is the fifth. It is the Supreme Self, the Inner Ruler, who is the main cause in completing the action. It has been already affirmed: ' I am seated in the hearts of all. From Me are memory, knowledge and their removal also' (15.15), and He will say further: ' The Lord, O Arjuna, lives in the heart of every being casuing them to spin round and round by His power as if set on a wheel' (18.61). The agency of the individual self is dependent on the Supreme Self as established in the aphorism: ' ut from the Supreme, because the scripture says so' (. S., 2.3.41). Now an objection may be raised in this way: If the agency of the individual self is dependent on the Supreme Self and the individual self cannot be charged with moral responsibility, then the scriptures containing injunctions and prohibitions become useless, as the individual self cannot be enjoined to act in regard to any action. The objection is disposed off by the author of the Vedanta-Sutras in the aphorism: ' ut with a view to the effects made on account of the purposelessness of injunctions and prohibitions' (2.3.42). The purport is this: y means of his senses, body etc., granted by the Supreme Self --- having Him for their support, empowered by Him, and thus deriving power from Him --- the individual self begins, of his own free will, the effort for directing the senses etc., for the purpose of performing actions conditioned by his body and organs. The individual self Itself, of Its own free will, is

responsible for activity, since the Supreme Self, abiding within, causes It to act only by granting His permission, just as works such as moving heavy stones and timber are collectively the labour of many persons and they are together responsible for the effect. ut each one of them (severally) also is responsible for it. In the same way each individual is answerable to Nature' s law in the form of positive and negative commandments.

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18.16 In fact, the agency of the individual self is subject to the consent of Supreme Self; such being the case, if the ' individual self regards Itself as the agent,' It is of wicked or perverse mind. For, It does not perceive the agent as It really is, since It possesses an ' uncultivated understanding,' namely, an understanding which does not reveal the real state of affairs.

18.17 He who, through the contemplation of the agency of the Supreme eing, is free from the self-conceit, ' I alone do everything' ; he whose understanding is not therefore tainted, and has come to be informed by the understanding; ' As I am not the agent of this work, its fruit is not connected with me; so this work does not belong to me' --- such a person, though he slays all these men, not merely hisma, etc., does not slay them. Therefore, he is not bound by the actions known as battle. The meaning is that the fruits of such actions do not accrue to him. Sri Krsna now teaches how action is induced. For this he differentiates actions generated by Sattva and the other Gunas. The object is to inculcate the desirability of the Sattvika type. For, only meditation on the self not being the agent, brings about the growth of Sattva.

18.18 (i) ' Knowledge' means this knowledge about the acts which ought to be performed. (ii) The ' object of knowledge' is the act which ought to be

performed. (iii) ' The knower' is the person who knows that act. The meaning is that the injunction to do acts, like Jyotistoma etc., is a combination of knowledge, object of knowledge, and the knower. Among these, action itself, which is the object of knowledge, is briefly described as threefold --- these being the instrument, action and the agent. The instrument forms the materials etc., which are the means. The action consists of the sacrifice etc. The agent is the performer.

18.19 The knowledge of action which ought to be done, the act to be performed, and the performer of the act are threefold, each of them being divided in accordance with Sattva etc., Listen about these, which are differentiated according to the Gunas.

18.20 The self (Atman), which is of the form of knowledge, is alike and uniform, though distinct, in all beings, even though they may externally, and from the point of view of duty, be distinguished as rahmanas, Ksatriyas, householders, celibates, fair, tall etc. The immutable selves in all these perishing forms or bodies are unaffected by the fruits of actions. Such knowledge of the immutability of the self in all changing beings, is Sattvika.

18.21 Whatever knowledge perceives in rahmana etc., at the time of work, the entity known as the Atman as of diverse nature because the bodies of those beings are tall or fair and are fit to attain the fruits of work --- know that knowledge to be Rajasika. The point is this: It is not a condemnation of the plurality of Atman. The Atman, though distinct, is uniform everywhere. The bodily attributes do not affect it. The knowledge lacking this understanding is stigmatised as Rajasa.

18.22 ut that knowledge which clings to a ' single type of act' as what ought to be done, viz., act in the form of the worship of ghosts or evil spirits yielding very small fruits, as if it yielded all fruits; that work ' not founded on any reason for having attachment,' because it is not a source of all fruits; ' untrue' because it is based on a false view of things such as seeing differentiation in the nature of the Atman; ' insignificant' , because the worship of ghosts and evil spirits

yields poor results --- for such reasons knowledge of this kind is declared to be Tamasika. After having thus classified the threefold division of knowledge relating to work according to Gunas in respect of a person who is qualified for work, Sri Krsna explains the triple division of the acts that ought to be done, according to Gunas.

18.23 ' Obligatory act' is that which is appropriate to one' s own station and stage of life. Doing it ' without attachment' means devoid of attachment to agency etc., and ' without desire or aversion' means that it is not done through desire to win fame and aversion to win notoriety, i.e., is performed without ostentation --- when obligatory works are performed in the above-mentioned way by one who is not after their fruits, they are said to be Sattvika.

18.24 ut whatever act is performed by one who seeks to gratify his desires, viz., by one who desires the results of his action and with the feeling of egoism, viz., has the misconceived notion that oneself is the agent; and with a great deal of effort --- such an act is of the nature of Rajas. Here va (or) is used in the sense of ca (and). Whatever action is performed by one who possesses the misconceived notion, ' This action demanding enormous effort is performed entirely by me' --- it is said to be Rajasika.

18.25 ' Anubandha' or consequence is here the pain which follows when a work is performed. ' Loss' means loss of wealth involved in doing that act. ' Injury' is the pain caused to living beings when the work is carried out. ' Capacity' is the ability of completing the act. Whenever an act is begun without consideration of these and from delusion, viz., due to ignoring the agency of the Supreme Person --- that act is said to be Tamasika.

18.26 ' Muktasangah' is one who is free from attachment to fruits. ' Anahamvadi' is one who is devoid of the feeling of being the agent. He is endued with ' steadiness and zeal.' ' Steadiness' is perseverance in regard to an act that has been begun in spite of the pain that is inevitable till the completion of the work. ' Zeal' is the possession of an active mind. One who is enduded with these, and whose mind remains firm, untouched by success and failure in war etc., and

also in gathering the material requisities for the work on hand --- such an agent is, of Sattvika nature.

18.27 The ' passionate' doer is one who aspires for fame; ' who seeks the fruits of his acts' is one who longs for the fruits of his acts; the ' greedy' is he who does not spend the wealth required for the act; the ' harmful' is one, who while acting, hurts others; the ' impure' , is one who lacks the purity required for the act; who is moved by ' delight and grief' in war etc., is one who is elated or depressed by success or failure in victory (or the opposite) --- a doer who fulfils these conditions is declared to be Rajasika.

18.28 ' Ayukta' is the doer who is unqualified for acts enjoined by the Sastras; the meaning is that he is engaged in perverse acts; who is ' unrefined' , means one uninstructed; who is ' stubborn' , means one who is not disposed to act; who is ' depraved' means one who has the taste for black magic etc; who is dishonest is one who is treacherous; who is ' indolent' is one who is not inclined to carry out actions undertaken; who is ' despondent' is one given to excessive despondency; and one who is ' dilatory' , is a person who, while engaged in black magic, etc., pays malevolent attention to produce long-standing evil to others --- such a doer is declared to be Tamasika. Thus, has been told the threefold division in terms of the Gunas of the knowledge about the work that ought to be performed, and about the agent of work. Now, Sri Krsna describe s the threefold division of uddhi and Dhrti (fortitude) on the basis of Gunas. These faculties give the determinate knowledge of all realities in existence and of all ends of human life (Purusarthas).

18.29 ' uddhi' is the knowledge in the form of discriminative determination. ' Dhrti' is the resolution to hold on with perseverance to what has been undertaken even against all obstacles. Of these two, hear now the threefold division according to Sattva and other Gunas.

18.30 ' Activity' is that Dharma which is the means for wordly prosperity. ' Renunciation' is that Dharma which is the means for release. The uddhi which knows both these as they are, is Sattviki-buddhi. Further, such a uddhi is

capable of distinguishing between what ought to be done and what ought not to be done by persons of different stations in life, having as their duty activity or renunciation at particular places or times. Such a uddhi helps them to know ' This ought to be done and this ought not to be done.' Such a uddhi discerns transgression of the Sastras as the cause of fear and observance of the Sastras as the cause of fearlessness. It enables one to distinguish between bondage and release, the true nature of Samsara and deliverance from it. The uddhi that functions in these ways is Sattvika.

18.31 That uddhi by which one does not know exactly the twofold Dharma previously mentioned and its opposite, and what ought to be done and what ought not to be done by those intent on them in accordance with place, time and conditions --- that uddhi is Rajasika.

18.32 That uddhi is of the nature of Tamas which is ' enveloped in Tamas' and ' reverses every value.' The meaning is that it regards Adharma as Dharma and Dharma as Adharma, existent as non-existent, and non-existent as existent, and higher truth as the lower and the lower truth as the higher, and thus reverses every value.

18.33 That Dhrti by which one through unswerving Yoga sustains the activities of the mind and the vital force and the sense-organs is said to be of the nature of Sattva. ' Yoga is worship of the Lord which forms the means for release. The meaning is that the Dhrti or fortitude by means of which one sustains the activities of the mind and other organs in the practice of Yoga (worship) until one' s object is accomplished, is of the nature of Sattva.

18.34 That Dhrti by which a person who, desirous of fruits, i.e., through intense attachment holds fast to duty, desires, and wealth, is of the nature of Rajas. y the terms ' Dharma-kam' artha,' the activities of the mind, vital force and senses as a means for the attainment of Dharma (duty) Kama (pleasure) and Artha (wealth) are signified. Even in the expression, ' One desirous of fruits,' that term indicates duty, desire and wealth, on account of the Rajasika nature of the aspirant. Therefore, what is said amounts to this: the Dhrti by which one

maintains activities of the mind etc., with the purpose of attaining duty; desire and wealth, is of the nature of Rajas.

18.35 That Dhrti by which a foolish person does not give up, i.e. persists in, sleep, and sensuous indulgence through the activities of the mind, vital force etc., --- that Dhrti is of the nature of Tamas. The terms fear, grief and depression indicate the objects generating fear, grief etc. That Dhrti by which one maintains the activities of the mind, the vital force etc., as a means for these, is of the nature of Tamas.

18.36 Now, hear about the pleasure to which the knowledge, action, agent etc., already mentioned are all subservient and which is threefold according to the Gunas. ... That pleasure in which a person, through long practice extending over a long time, gradually attains to incomparable joy and never again is engulfed by the pain of life in Samsara. Sri Krsna explains the same:

18.37 That pleasure, which ' at the beginning,' i.e., at the time of beginning of Yoga, is ' like poison,' i.e., is painful because it requires strenuous efforts and because the distinct nature of the self is not yet experienced, but which after long practice fructifies in the blissful experience of the self --- that joy born of a serene state of mind ' focusing on the self' is Sattvika. The uddhi concerning the self is ' Atama-buddhi.' When all objects are withdrawn from that uddhi it becomes serene (Prasanna). The joy born of the experience of the self in its distinct nature, when all objects are withdrawn from the uddhi, becomes ' like elixir' . That joy is said to be Sattvika.

18.38 That which at the ' beginning,' i.e., at the time of experience looks like elixir because of the contact of senses with their objects agreable to them, but ' at the end,' i.e., when satiation or further incapacity to enjoy due to over-indulgence in them occurs, looks life poison --- that pleasure is said to be Rajasika. In this latter state these so-called enjoyments cause the misery of Naraka.

18.39 Pleasure of the Tamasika type causes delusion to the self at the beginning and the end of enjoyment. Here ' delusion' means the absence of knowledge about things as they are. Pleasure springing from sleep, sloth and error are the cause of it. Even at the time of experience, sleep etc., are the cause of delusion. It is clear how sleep causes delusion. ' Sloth' is indolence in sensory operations. When sensory activities are slow, dimness of knowledge results. ' Error' is heedlessness regarding what ought to be done. From this also occurs the dimness of knowledge. Thus, these two also cause delusion. Such pleasure is declared to be Tamasika. Therefore what is meant is this: subduing Rajas and Tamas, the Sattva alone should be allowed to develop by the aspirant for relase.

18.40 There is no Sattva or creature born either among men etc., on the earth or among the gods in heaven, from rahma down to immobile things, and having their basis in Prakrti, that is free from the dominance of the three Gunas of Prakrti. ' Tyaga' , which has been determined as forming the means for release in the Sruti texts like ' y Tyaga alone do they attain immortality' (Ma. Na., 8.14), is of the same meaning as of the word ' Sannyasa' . It is rooted in the relinquishment of the sense of agency in actions that are being performed. The relinquishment of the results and of possessiveness in actions, and the relinguishing of agency are to be gained by ascribing the agency to the Supreme Person. As all these are the effects of the increase of Sattva-guna, the differences of the effects of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas have been described at length with a view to instruct that Sattva is to be cultivated. Now Sri Krsna, with a view to inculcate that actions done including their fruits, as a means to release and attainment of Him, must be of the nature of the worship of the Supreme Person, and that the fruit thereof is the attainment of Him --- describes the actions obligatory for the qualified classes of the people such as rahmanas, differentiated by virtue of the natural qualities arising from the Gunas such as Sattva, as also the occupations prescribed for those classes.

18.41 The nature of rahmanas, Ksatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras are due to their respective inherent dispositions. The meaning is that their past Karma has been the cause of determining births as rahmanas etc. The Sattva and other

Gunas are the result of such Karma. The Sattva-guna is born from the inherent nature of the rahmana becoming dominant by suppressing the qualities of Rajas and Tamas. The quality of Rajas originates from the inherent nature of the Ksatriyas becoming dominant by suppressing qualities of Sattva and Tamas. Tamoguna arises from the inherent nature of the Vaisya, becoming dominant in a little way by suppressing Sattva and Rajas. The duties and works assigned to them according to the Gunas constituting their inherent nature, are expounded and allotted by the Sastras in the order described. For the Sastras analyse that the rahmanas etc., possess such and such attributes and such and such are their duties and occupations.

18.42 ' Sama' is the control of the external sense-organs. ' Dama' is the control of the mind. ' Tapas' is the chastisement of the body by controlling enjoyments, as enjoined by the Sastras. ' Sauca' is fitness for performing acts as enjoined by the Sastras. ' Ksanti' is preserving the composure of the mind, though injured by others. ' Arjava' is straightforwardness expressing itself in correct outward manifestation to others in consonance with one' s own mind. ' Jnana' is knowledge about the real nature of the higher and lower truths. ' Vijnana' is the knowledge pertaining to exceptional attributes belonging to the Supreme Reality. ' Astikya' or faith is firm conviction in the truth of all things enjoined in the Vedas. The meaning is that it is unshakable by any reason whatever. ' Astikya' is positive conviction in the truth to the following effect: (1) The Lord Vasudeva, the Supreme Person, is signified by the term, Supreme rahman. (2) He is devoid of even the slightest trace or evil. (3) He possesses countless hosts of auspicious and excellent attributes such as knowledge, strength etc., boundless and natural. (4) To reveal His nature is the sole purpose of the whole of Vedas and the Vedanta and He can be known only through them. (5) He is the sole cause of the universe (6) He is the foundation of the entire universe. (7) He is the actuator of all. (8) All actions taught in the Vedas form His worship. (9) When worshipped through them, He confers fruits known as Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksa. That such is the meaning has been declared in the following text: ' Indeed I am to be known from all the Vedas' (15.15); ' I am the origin of all; from Me proced everything' (10.8), ' All this is strung on Me' (7.7), ' Knowing me as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities

... he attains peace'   (10.29), There is nothing greater than myself, Arjuna (7.7) ' He from whom proceeds the activity of all beings and by whom all this is pervaded --- by worshipping Him with his duty, will a man reach perfection' (18.46); and ' He who knows Me as unborn, without a beginning and the great Lord of the worlds ...'   (10.3) Such are the duties of the rahmana arising from his inherent nature.

18.43 ' Valour'   is the ability of plunging into a battle without fear. ' Invincibility'   is the capacity to remain undefeated by others. ' Steadiness'   is the capacity to complete a work that has been started despite obstacles. ' Adroitness'   is the ability in executing all works. ' Apalayana'   is not fleeing in a battle though one is convinced of one' s death. ' Generosity'   is parting with one' s own possessions to others even to its entirety. ' Lordliness'   is the capacity to govern all others. This is the duty of a Ksatriya born of his inherent nature.

18.44 ' Agriculture'   is cultivation to produce crops. The meaning of ' cattle breeding'   is the protection and rearing of cattle. ' Trade'   is the activity causing the amassing of wealth through buying and selling. This is the duty of Vaisya born of his inherent nature. The duty of a Sudra, born of his inherent nature, is service to the three Orders mentioned earlier. All these have been described to stress that the occupational activities of the four stations are auxiliary to the performance of sacrifices etc., which are ordained by the Sastra. Sacrifices etc., are common to the first three stations. Control of the senses etc., are common to those who, among the first three stations, are anxious for release. As a rahmana possesses preponderance of Sattva, and as the control of the senses, mind etc., can be performed by him easily and naturally, control of the senses etc., have been prescribed as his duty. As control of the mind, senses etc., can be performed only with difficulty by the Ksatriyas and the Vaisyas owing to the preponderance of Rajas and Tamas respectively in them, these have not been stated as their duty. The occupation of a rahmana is officiating as priest in sacrifices, teaching the Vedas and receiving gifts. The occupation of a Ksatriya is protecting the people and that of the Vaisyas is farming etc., as mentioned before. The duty and occupation of the Sudra is service to the three stations.

18.45 When one is devoted to his own duty in a way mentioned earlier, he attains perfection i.e., the supreme state. When a person is devoted to his duty, how he attains perfection, i.e., attains the supreme state, listen.

18.46 He from whom arise all activities as origination of all beings and by whom all this is pervaded, by worshipping Him, i.e., Myself, who abide in Indra and other divinites as the Inner Ruler, man attains perfection, consisting in the attainment of Myself by My grace. It has been told before that everything originates from Me and all this is pervaded by Me, in texts like the following: ' I am the origin and dissolution of the whole universe' (7.6), ' There is nothing higher than Myself, O Arjuna' (7.7), ' This entire universe is pervaded by Me in an unmanifest form' (9.4), ' Under My supervision, the Prakrti gives birth to all mobile and immobile entities' (9.10) and ' I am the origin of all; from Me proceed everything' (10.8).

18.47 One' s proper Dharma is that which is suitable for performance by oneself, in the form of worshipping Myself, relinquishing agency etc., as has been taught. For, Karma Yoga, consisting in the activities of sense organs, is easy to perform by one in association with Prakrti. Thus, Karma Yoga, even if it is defective in some respects, is better than the Dharma of another, i.e., than Jnana-yoga, even for a person capable of controlling his senses, which is an attainment liable to negligence, because it consists of control over all sense-organs; for, though this may be well performed occasionaly, one is always liable to deflection from it. He explains the same: As Karma consists of the activities of the sense-organs, it is ordained by Nature for one who is conjoined with Prakrti, i.e., the body. So by performing Karma Yoga one does not incur any stain. ut Jnana Yoga is liable to negligence, because it requires the control of the senses from the very beginning for its performance. One intent on it is likely to incur stain from negligence. [Thus we are reminded about what was mentioned in the third chapter - that Karma Yoga alone is greater.]

18.48 So, one should not relinquish one' s works, understanding that they are natural, are easy to perform and not liable to negligence. Such thoughts

coupled with the idea that there are imperfections in them should not lead you to abandon them. The meaning is that though one is fit for Jnana Yoga, one should perform Karma Yoga only. All enterprises, be they of Karma or Jnana, are indeed enveloped by imperfections, by pain, as fire by smoke. ut still there is this difference: Karma Yoga is easy and does not involve negligence, but Jnana Yoga is contrary to this.

18.49 He whose understanding is, on all sides, without attachments, concerning fruits etc., whose ' self is conquered,' i.e., who has conquered his mind; who, by contemplating on the agency of the Supreme Person, is free from the habit of attributing agency to the self; and who is thus equipped with Sannyasa which has been positively determined to be the same as Tyaga --- such a man, performing actions, attains supreme perfection which is free from all activities. The meaning is that he attains devotion to Dhyana which is the consummation of even Jnana Yoga; he attains Dhyana Yoga (Yoga of meditation) consisting in the complete cessation of sensory activity, which is going to be described hereafter.

18.50 One who has attained ' perfection' , viz., one who has attained perfection in meditation generated by the Karma Yoga performed day after day till death --- how, in what way, he attains the brahman, learn this from Me in brief. It is the same rahman who is described as the supreme consummation of knowledge. The meaning is that the self is the supreme consummation, the supreme end, of knowledge which is of the nature of meditation.

18.51 - 18.53 ' Endowed with a purified understanding' means endowed with the uddhi capable of understanding the self as it is in reality; ' subduing the mind by steadiness' means making the mind fit for meditation by turning away from external and internal objects; ' relinquishing sound and other objects of senses' means keeping them far away, casting aside love and hate occasioned by them (i.e., the sense objects). ' Resorting to solitude' means living in a lonely place free from hindrances to meditation; ' eat but little' means eating neither too much nor too little; ' restraining speech, body and mind' means directing the operations of body, speech and mind to meditation; ' ever

engaged in the Yoga of meditation' means being like this, i.e., constantly engaged in the Yoga of meditation day after day until death; ' taking refuge in dispassion' means developing aversion to all objects except the one entity to be meditated upon, by considering the imperfections of all objects and thus cultivating detachment to everything. Forsaking ' egoism' means abandoning the tendency to consider what is other than the self, as well as neutralising the power of forcible Vasnas (tendencies) which nourish (egoism), and the resulting pride, desire, wrath and possessiveness. ' With no feeling of mine' means free from the notion that what does not belong to oneself belongs to oneself; ' Who is tranquil' means, who finds sole happiness in experiencing the self. One who has become like this and performs the Yoga of meditation becomes worthy for the state of rahman. The meaning is that, freed from all bonds, he experiences the self as It really is.

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18.54 ' Having realised the state of rahman,'   means having got from revelation an understanding of the nature of the self as consisting of unlimited knowledge and of being a Sesa (subservient being) to Me. Subservience to Me has been posited in, ' Know that which is other than this (Prakrti or lower Nature) to be the higher Prakrti of Mine'   (7.5). One who is ' tranquil'   means one who is not contaminated by various forms of grief (the five Klesas of Yoga-sutras), and does not grieve about any being other than Myself, nor desires anything other than Myself. On the other hand, he becomes equally indifferent to all beings

other than Myself as worthless as straw and attains supreme hakti for Me. He attains ' supreme devotion' to Me, which is of the form of an experience which makes Me dear beyond all description --- Me the Lord of all, to whom creation, protection and dissolution of the universe is a sport, who is devoid of the slightest trace of evil, who is the sole seat of countless hosts of auspicious attributes which are excellent and unlimited; and who is the ocean of the elixir of beauty; who is the Lord of Sri; who is Lotus-eyed; and who is the self' s own Lord. Sri Krsna declares the fruits of this (devotion):

18.55 Through such devotion, he knows ' who I am,' i.e., knows My own essence and My nature, and ' what I am,' i.e., in My attributes and glory. Knowing Me truly, he rises to a higher level than this hakti, and acquiring knowledge of the truth, enters into Me through devotion. The meaning is that he attains Me by means of infinite and unsurpassed hakti which develops subsequent in time to the vision of the nature, attributes and glory of the Lord in reality. Here the term ' Tatah' (through) denotes that devotion is the cause of attainment; for it has been stated to be the cause of entrance n the text, ' ut by singel-minded devotion it is possible ...' (11.54). In this way, the crowning development has been told starting from the disinterested performance of periodical and occasional rites suitable for the various stations and stages of life, which are to be performed to propitiate the Supreme Person. Sri Krsna now explains that even for actions meant for attaining desired objects (Kamya-karmas) the crowning stage is the same as for these described above, provided they too are done not for fulfilling one' s desires but as offerings to propitiate the Supreme Person.

18.56 ' Taking refuge in Me' means leaving agency etc., to Me. He who performs ' all works constantly' means works that are not only obligatory and occasional acts but even those meant to fulfil desires (Kamya Karmas) --- he attains, by My grace, the eternal realm which is immutable. ' Pada' means that which is attained. The meaning is that he attains Me. [The idea is that the performance of even those ritualistic actions enjoined for those having the fulfilment of certain desires in view, even these actions, if done without any such desire but only as the worship of the Supreme Person --- the have the

same effect as the performance of the enjoined daily and occasional rituals to which no effect except the purification of the self is offered by the Sastras.]
Since it is so, therefore:

18.57 ' y your mind' means with thought which considers the self as belonging to Me and as controlled by Me. For, it has been declared: ' Surrendering all your acts to Me with a mind focussed on the self' (3.30). Surrendering all acts to Me along with agentship and the object of worship and regarding ' Me as the goal,' i.e., constantly contemplating that I alone am to be attained as the goal; performing all acts; and resorting to uddhi-Yoga --- focus your mind on Me always. uddhi Yoga here implies the mental attitude special to the seeker of salvation in regard to agency of works, the fruits etc. Thus

18.58 Thus, focusing your thought on Me, if you can perform all acts, you will, by My grace, cross over all difficulties of Samsara. If, however, out of ' self-conceit,' i.e., out of the feeling, ' I know well what is to be done and what is not to be done' --- out of such a feeling, if you do not heed My words, you shall perish. Except Myself, there is none who knows what ought and what ought not to be done by all living beings; there is also none other than Myself who is in the position of a law-giver to them.

18.59 If, in your ' self-conceit,' i.e., under a false sense of independence that you know what is good for you and what is not --- if, not heeding My command, you think, ' I will not fight,' then this resolve based on your sense of independence will be in vain. For Nature will compel you to go against your resolve --- you who are ignorant and who adversely react to my sovereignty.
He elucidates the same:

18.60 For, heroism is the duty of a Ksatriya born of his nature. Impelled by your own duty of heroism born of your own nature, you will lose self-control when you get the taunts of your enemies. Unable to suffer it, you will be compelled to engage them in battle, which, now, out of delusion and ignorance, you do not desire to do. All beings have been ordained by Me to follow their Prakrti acquired by their previous Karmas. Listen about it:

18.61 Lord Vasudeva, who is the ruler over all, lives in ' the heart of all beings,' i.e., in the region from which arises all knowledge which is at the root of all secular and spiritual activities. How and doing what does He exist? He exists enabling, by His Maya (power), ' all beings who are mounted, as it were, on the machine Prakrti' in the form of body and senses created by Himself, to act in accordance with their Gunas of Sattva and others. It was already expressed in ' And I am seated in the hearts of all. From Me are memory, knowledge and their removal also' (15.15) and in ' From Me proceed everything' (10.8). The Srutis also proclaim ' He who, dwelling in the self' (r. U. Madh., 3.7.22). He now explains the way to get rid of the Maya:

18.62 Such being the case, take refuge with all your heart (Sarvabhavena), by every disposition of your body, senses and mind (Sarvatmana) in Him --- Him, the ruler of all, who has become your charioteer out of compassion for dependents, and who orders you, ' Act thus' and so on. Even if you do not do so now, fighting in battle etc., is inevitable for you who are ignorant and actuated by His Maya, but then you will get ruined. Therefore, fight etc., in the manner which has been explained by Him. Such is the meaning. Acting in this way, you will attain supreme peace, release from all bondage, and the eternal abode. Hundreds of Srutis declare it: ' That supreme place of Visnu which the sages see' (Rg. S., 1.2.6.5); ' They become meritorious and reach this heaven where Devas and Sadhyas dwell' (Tai. A., 3.12); ' Where dwell the ancient sages, the first-born' (Tai.Sam., 4.7.13.1); ' The supreme place above the paradise in the heart of the Supreme Heaven' (Ma. Na., 8.14); ' He who is in the Supreme Heaven and presides over this' (Rg. S., 8.7.17.7); ' Now that light which shines above this Supreme Heaven' (Cha. U., 3.13.7); and ' He reaches the end of the journey, the Highest abode of Visnu' (Ka. U., 3.9).

18.63 Thus, in this manner, has been set forth everything that is to be acquired by those aspirants for release --- the mystery of mysteries, concerning Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and hakti Yoga. Reflecting on it fully, do what you wish to do according to your qualification --- i.e., follow Karma Yoga, or Jnana Yoga or hakti Yoga according to your liking. Such is the meaning.

18.64 It has been said that hakti Yoga is the most secret of all secrets, in such texts as ' I will declare to you, who does not cavil, this most mysterious knowledge' (9.1). Hear again My supreme word concerning it (i.e., hakti Yoga). As you are exceedingly dear to Me, therefore, I shall declare what is good for you.

18.65 What is enjoined in Vedanta texts such as ' I know the Great Person of the radiance of the sun, who is beyond this Prakrti. Knowing Him thus, one becomes here immortal; there is no path for immortality' (Sve. U., 3.8); what is designated by words such as knowledge (Vedanta), meditation (Dhyana) and worship (Upasana); what is of the form of direct perception (Darsana) having the character of continuous succession of memory of a surpassingly loving nature to the worshipped --- it is this that is enjoined herein by the words ' Focus your mind on Me,' ' e My devotee.' It means, be one to whom I am incomparably dear. Since I am the object of superabundant love, meditate on Me, i.e., practise the succession of memory of unsurpassed love of Me. Such is the meaning. e My worshipper (yaji). Here also the expression, ' e My devotee' is applicable. Yajna is worship. Worship Me as one exceedingly dear to you. Worship (Aradhana) is complete subservience to the Lord. Prostrate before Me. Prostration means bowing down. The meaning is: ow down humbly before Me with great love. Renouncing thus all ego-centredness, you shall come to Me. I make this solemn promise to you. Do not take it as a mere flattery. For you are dear to Me. It has been already stated, ' For I am inexpressibly dear to the man of knowledge and dear is he to Me' (7.17). He in whom there is surpassing love for Me, I hold him also as surpassingly dear to Me. Consequently, not being able to bear separation from him, I myself will enable him to attain Me. It is this truth alone that has been solemnly declared to you in the expression that ' you shall come to Me alone.'

18.66 ' Relinquishing all Dharmas means the complete relinquishment of the sense of agency, possessiveness, fruits etc., in the practising of Karma, Jnana and hakti Yogas in the way instructed, and the realising of Me as the agent, object of worship, the means and the end. It means that relinquishment is not

of all devotional duties but only of the sense of agency and the fruits. This is the Sastraic relinquishment of all Dharmas. It is firmly established in the beginning of this chapter commencing from, ' Listen regarding My decision, O Arjuna, about abandonment; for abandonment is declared to be of three kinds' (18.4), and ' Renouncing attachments and also the fruit, such abandonment is regarded as Sattvika ... for it is impossible for one who bears the body to abandon acts entirely. ut he who gives up the fruits of works, is called the abandoner' (18.9-11). If you practise such abandonment of the sense of agency and fruits, I will release you from all ' sins' --- i.e., I will release you from all evil incompatible with the attainment of Myself, consisting of innumerable acts of the nature of doing what ought not to be done and not doing what ought to be done. These piled up from beginningless times from the obstruction in the way. Grieve not, you should not despair; for I shall release you from all these obstructions. Another (alternative) explanation is this: hakti Yoga is possible only for those people to whom the Lord is exceedingly dear and who are free from all evils. Those evils are so huge in their case that the expiatory rites which could wash them off, could not be performed in the limited time of one' s life span. Ajuna therefore thought that he was unfit for commencing hakti Yoga. To remove the grief of Arjuna the Lord said: ' Completely relinquishing all Dharmas, seek Me alone for refuge.' Expiatory rites can be taken here as what is meant by Dharma, Completely forsake these rites (Dharmas) appropriate for the removal of numerous and varied sins piled up from beginningless time and obstructing the starting of hakti Yoga. The expiatory rites consist of practices like Krcchra, Candrayana, Kusmanda, Vaisvanara, Vratapati, Pavitresti, Trvrit, Agnistoma etc., which are of manifold varieties, and which are difficult to perform on account of the brevity of life. So in order to succeed in commencing hakti Yoga, seek Me alone for refuge. I am supremely compassionate, the refuge of all without considering the differences of character among them, and am an ocean of tenderness for those dependent on Me. I will release you from all evil, the nature of which has been explained as incompatible with the commencement of hakti Yoga. Grieve not. [oth these interpretations of this famous verse are said to teach only hakti Yoga and not Prapatti. ut the question will rise in one' s mind --- why should it not be so taken?]

18.67 I have taught you this most secret doctrine. This should not be imparted by you to someone who has not practised austere disciplines. Never should this be taught to someone who is not devoted to Me and to you, the teacher (i.e., when you have to play the role of a teacher of this doctrine). The meaning is that it should not be taught by you to someone who, though practising austerities, is not a devotee and does not serve Me. It is also never to be taught to one who has no wish to listen, even though he is a devotee. Nor should it be imparted to one who traduces Me, that is, who --- when My nature, glories and attributes are described --- discovers defects in them. The differences of case (from ablative to nominative form) is to teach that the last one is the most despicable character.

18.68 Whose expounds or elucidates this supreme mystery to My devotees, he, acquiring supreme devotion towards Me, will reach Me only. There is no doubt about this.

18.69 There never exists nor has existed anyone other than such a person as described, who does greater service to Me than he. In the future too, there will not be another such. The first reference is to those who are not worthy to hear the Gita. It is meant to teach that explaining it to them is more displeasing to the Lord than not teaching to those who are worthy.

18.70 He who will study the dialogue between us, which is consistent with the path to realisation, by him I shall be worshipped through the sacrifice of knowledge. Such is My view. The meaning is that whateve sacrifice of knowledge is taught herein, by that I shall become worshipped by the mere fact of its study.

18.71 A man who, with faith and without cavilling, hears the Gita when faught by a qualified teacher, he too is, by such hearing, released from all evil incompatible with devotional life. He shall reach the Lokas, i.e., the realms of the hosts of My devotees who have done virtuous acts, and who will facilitate the growth of devotion in these new arrivals and lead them ultimately to

liberation.

18.72 O Arjuna, have you heard attentively all that I have taught? Has your delusion caused by ignorance, been dispelled --- that ignorance deluded by which you said, ' I shall not fight' ?

18.73 Arjuna said -- ' Delusion' or misapprehension is perverted knowledge. y Your grace it has been destroyed. ' Smrti' or memory is the knowledge of things as they really are. I have acquired that. Misapprehension here is the misconception that the self is the Prakrti (body-mind) which is the non-self in reality. It consists in one not apprehending that all intelligent and non-intelligent entities, by reason of their forming the body of the Supreme eing, have Him as their Atman and are thus ensouled by Him. The misapprehension also consists in the lack of knowledge that actions, obligatory and occasional, do not cause bondage but actually form a means for the propitiation of the Supreme eing. All such misapprehensions are now destroyed. The various phases of knowledge that cleared the misunderstanding may be catalogued as follows: (1) The self is different from Prakrti and is therefore devoid of the qualities of Prakrti. Its nature is that of the knower of Prakrti. (2) The self is a Sesa (sub-ordinate and servant) of the Supreme Person and is ruled by Him. The true knowledge about the Supreme Person is that He is what is signified by the expression Supreme rahman. (3) He is the great ocean of all auspicious, excellent attributes such as knowledge, strength, glory, valour, power, brilliance etc., which are unbounded and natural. His essence consists solely of auspiciousness. He is antagonistic to all that is evil without exception. The origin, sustentation and dissolution of the entire universe are His sport. (4) You (Sri Krsna) are Vasudeva, the Supreme Person, known from the Vedanta, and who can be reached only by worship, which has taken the form of hakti. (5) hakti can be achieved by the control of the senses and the mind, the abandonment of prohibited acts and the performance of occasional and obligatory acts as solely intended for the goal of the satisfaction of the Supreme Person. hakti has to be developed day after day through the regular practice of the discriminatory knowledge of the higher and lower truths. All this has been attained by me (Arjuna). Therefore I stand steadfast, freed from the

doubts and devoid of the depression rooted in perverted knowledge nourished by compassion and love for relatives. Now I shall fulfil Your words, concerned with fighting etc., which ought to be done by me. I shall fight as instructed by You. Such is the meaning. Sanjaya now relates to Dhrtarastra who had questioned him earlier as to what his sons and the Pandavas were doing in the battle:

18.74 Sanjaya said -- Thus, in this way have I been hearing, this wondrous and thrilling dialogue, as it took place between Vasudeva, the son of Vasudeva, and His paternal aunt' s son Arjuna, who is a Mahatman, one possessed of a great intelligence, and who has resorted to the feet of Sri Krsna.

18.75 y the grace of Vyasa i.e., by the benefit of the divine sense of perception, granted by him, I have heard this supreme mystery called Yoga from Sri Krsna himself --- Sri Krsna who is the treasure-house of knowledge, strength, sovereignty, valour, power and brilliance.

18.76 Remembering this auspicious and wondrous dialogue between Sri Krsna and Arjuna, directly heard by me, I rejoice again and again.

18.77 Great amazement is caused in me, stirred by joy born of the repeated remembrance of that most marvellous and sovereign form of the Lord revealed to Arjuna and directly witnessed by me. I rejoice again and again. Why say more?

18.78 Wherever there is Sri Krsna, the son of Vasudeva, the ' Yogesvara' who is the ruler of the various manifestations of Nature pertaining to all intelligent and non-intelligent entities that have high and low forms, and on whose volition depend the differences in the essential natures, existences and the activities of all things other than Himself, and wherever there is Arjuna, the archer, who is his paternal aunt' s son and who took sole refuge at His feet --- in such places there always will be present fortune, victory, wealth and sound morality. Such is my firm conviction.